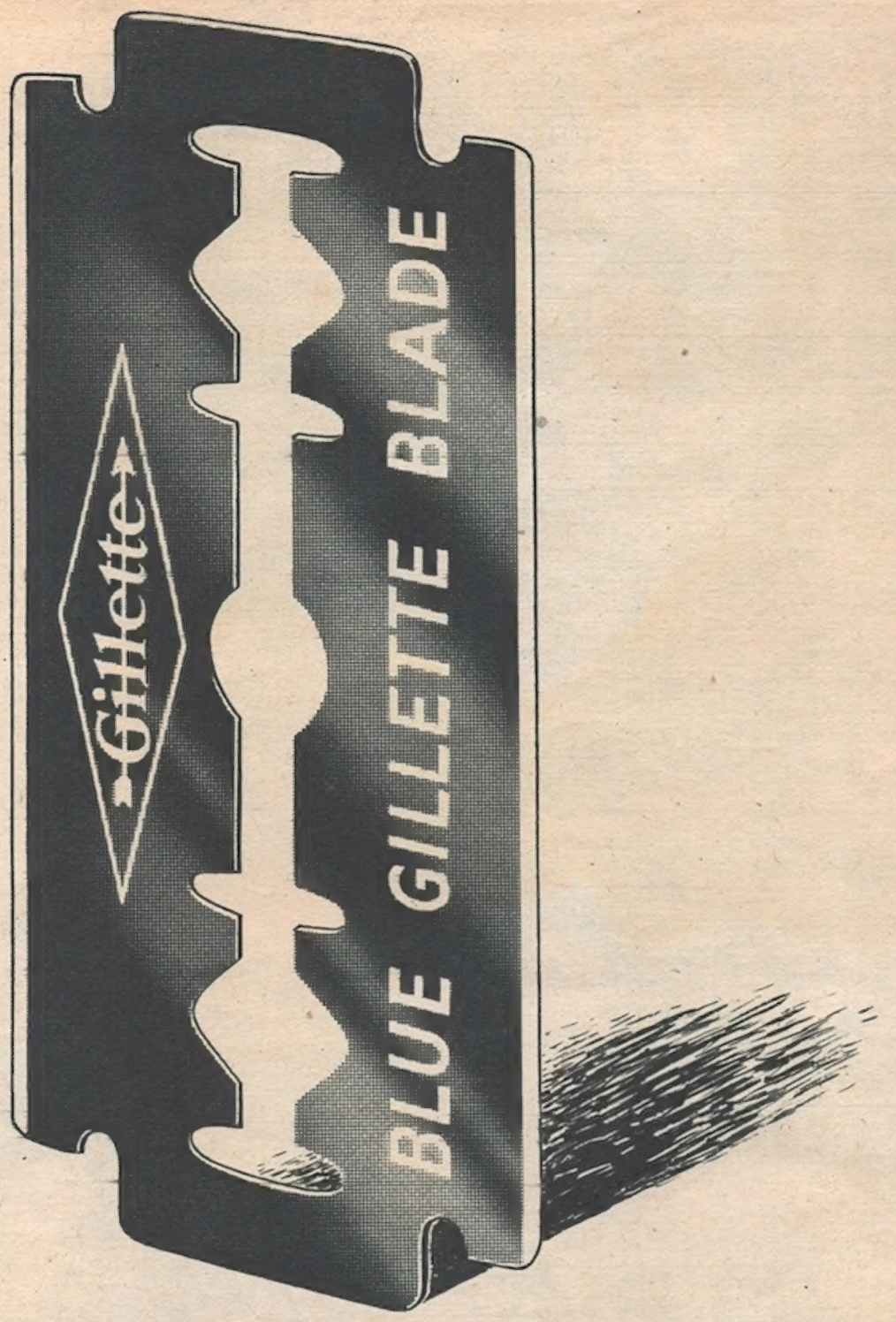
Week ending March 17 1956 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

Begins inside

THIS IS MY LIFE

by Eamonn Andrews



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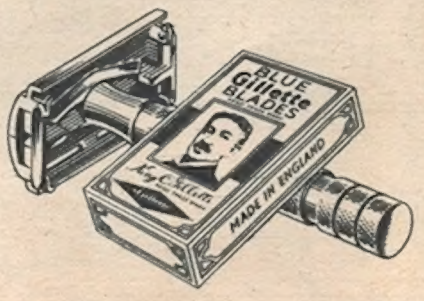

GOOD MORNINGS BEGIN WITH GILLETTE

JOHN BULL

189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

TEMPLE BAR 2468 MARCH 17 1956 VOLUME 99 NUMBER 2594

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Andrews records "This Is MY Life" while Greatorex prods and prompts

EAMONN ANDREWS has turned down many offers for his life story, and when assistant editor Wilfred Greatorex approached him on behalf of JOHN BULL recently, he at first said no. "For one thing," he explained, "a man shouldn't commit himself to autobiography until he's around the fifty mark." But Greatorex kept talking, and after three and a half hours Andrews said yes.

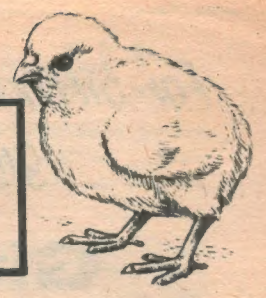
The next problem was time, for Andrews is fully booked with radio and TV work. The answer was a tape recorder. Greatorex met him at his flat near Hyde Park whenever there was an hour to spare—"mostly at a time when London isn't properly awake," says Greatorex—and with the microphone between them Andrews talked and Greatorex prodded and prompted.

When the interviews were over, Greatorex checked with the tape manufacturer and learned that Andrews had used just under three and a half miles of tape to record the first thirty-three years of *This Is MY Life* (page 9). Carrying the mathematics of autobiography a little farther, Greatorex worked out that if we had waited until Andrews was fifty, there would have been enough tape to stretch from Broadcasting House to Lime Grove and back.

IT is not surprising that Mark Derby should have poured his knowledge of the East into his novels and stories, or that most of them should deal with violent death, for at the end of the war against Japan he was in India, and later served in Malaya. His experiences in the jungle war against terrorist gangs gave him the background for his highly successful first novel, *Malayan Rose*. Now, with five books and many short stories to his credit, he is being hailed as a writer in the John Buchan class. His latest story, *The Girl Who Hated*, begins on page 14.

Derby refuses to accept dull routine as a substitute for life as he knows it. After the war he still sought adventure. "Like millions of others," he says, "I wanted to escape for a while from the post-war world. Unlike most others I did escape." He travelled to an island in the Celebes and lived for months among the primitive tribes. In his first week he was invited to traditional death-feasts; at one, seventy bulls were sacrificed.

A restless, roving spirit, Derby spends most of his time in Indonesia, but at the moment he is living in Spain.



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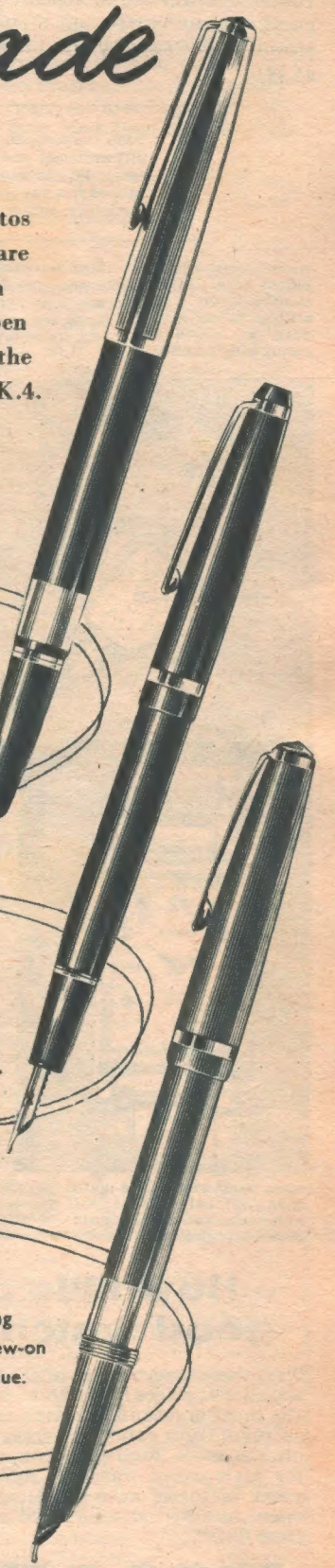

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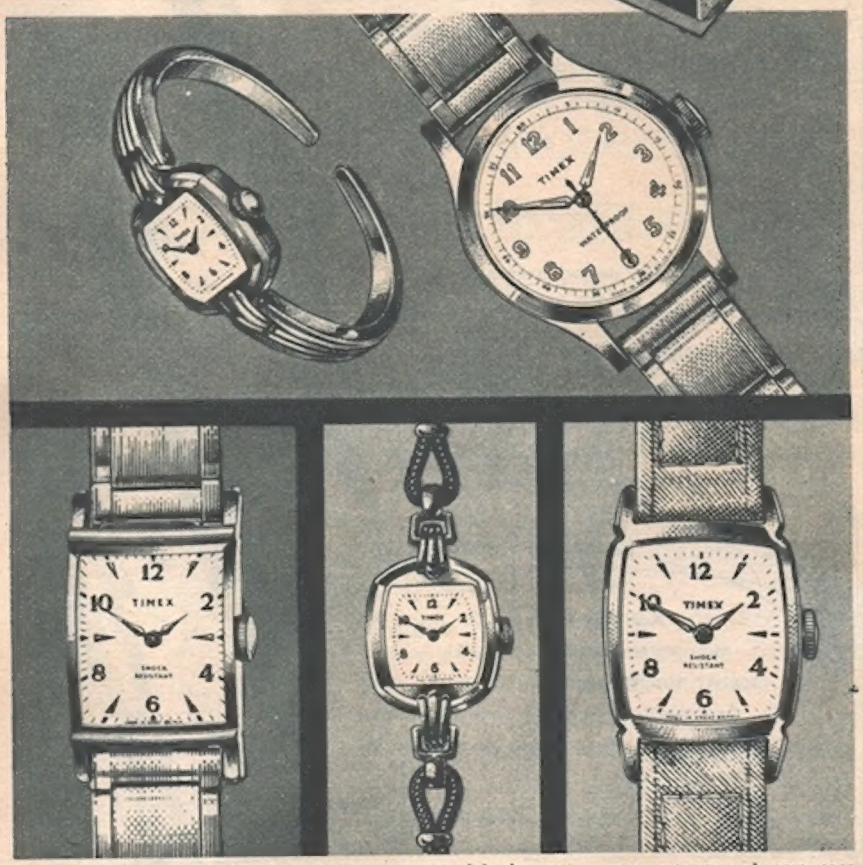

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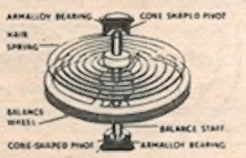

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Free Speech

- **Sound barriers wanted in "semis"**
- **Links with tomorrow's leaders**
- **Memories the years cannot dim**

Now that nearly every house has radio, television, a record player, and possibly a piano, isn't it time we had soundproof houses?

Light sleepers, people with babies, night workers, students and the sick need peace and quiet, yet they are tormented by continuous din. All future houses should be detached or at least built so that the main living-rooms and bedrooms are not joined to next door. And surely someone can invent a cheap, efficient soundproofing material to solve the problem in existing houses and flats. —Mrs. J. K., Widnes, Lancs.

"Noise can be cut down by using the various insulating materials on the market, and their efficiency is generally proportionate to their price," says a building expert. "But one of the ways in which sound travels is through windows, and there is little you can do about that.

"Detached houses may be an answer, but it is a very expensive one with land at its present price."

Tourists' Aid

As a help to our tourist trade ("Free Speech," February 25), I suggest that we follow the example of Continental countries.

At their museums, art galleries and exhibitions I have found brochures and guides in at least three languages.

We seem to expect all our visitors to be able to read English.—F. J. Verrier, London, N.15.

. . . During the Festival of Britain, buttonhole badges for linguists were available for anyone who cared to apply for them. I wore one showing that I spoke German, and I made many new friends.

I still wear the badge in the peak holiday season and I expect many others are doing the same.—G. W. Davis, South Benfleet, Essex.

Train Of Thought

My train recently stopped at a station and stayed there for half an hour. Eventually, a porter told me that the engine had broken down and another was coming to replace it.

This news could have been given to every passenger over the station loudspeaker system, and would have done much to prevent annoyance.

Yet, nobody, apparently, thought of doing so—and I have often noticed that British Railways remain remarkably secretive about the causes of delays.

Having installed modern methods of keeping in touch with their passengers, why don't the railways use them fully?—G. L., Maidenhead.

"All station staffs are told that as much use as possible must be made of public address systems when trains are delayed," says the British Transport Commission.

In Touch

As a staff sergeant in the Boys' Brigade, may I say that this organization, at least, is keeping in touch with boys doing National Service ("Free Speech," February 25).

Several "Anchor Clubs" have been formed at army camps—the latest being at Catterick, Yorkshire, whose members come from Manchester, Glasgow, Nottingham, Paisley, Kirkcaldy, Aberdeen and Middlesex.

Many companies, including mine, correspond with members in the forces, and every effort is made to encourage suitable boys to return as leaders.—Keith Jowett, Tenth Avenue, New Wortley, Leeds 12.

. . . In the Scout Movement, some members are lost when the Senior Scout is due to become a Rover at about seventeen and a half.

We deal with this by allowing suitable Scouts to become Scoutmasters before they are called up. Rover Crews keep in touch with their members in the services.—C. P. J., Great Crosby, Liverpool.

Varsity Vagaries

As an ex-undergraduate, I was delighted to hear of the rustication of a wild Oxford student. During my three years at college I was appalled by the hooliganism of my fellows.

Far from being a blue stocking, I gained a lot of enjoyment from my student days, but I am glad to think that I retained my sense of values.

Let us have potential citizens and adults in our universities—not overgrown children with a perverted sense of humour and no social conscience. —Mrs. M. E. Bush, Chipstead Way, Banstead, Surrey.

Under Cover

Farm tractors should have cabs available for bad weather. No car or lorry driver would drive fully exposed to the weather, so why should farm workers?—L. Wilkinson, Burton Fleming, Driffield, East Yorkshire.

Cabs can be bought as extras, but motor manufacturers say that many British farmers find that cabs obscure the view. The demand for them has increased in recent years, however.

Forgotten Moments

Old people, I notice, can often remember things they learnt long ago, but they forget occurrences only a few days old. My grandmother, who is ninety, can remember long passages of poetry learnt in childhood, but she cannot bring to mind what happened yesterday.—Mrs. G. P., Wrexham, Denbighshire.

"This is a normal result of increasing age, which leads to changes in blood supplies to the brain," says a doctor. "Quite often the first areas of the brain to be blotted out are those concerned with recent memory, leaving unaffected the areas of memory of happenings long ago."

Lawrence Memorial

The description of the Dorset home of Lawrence of Arabia in your series, "Open To View" (John Bull, February 18) made me recall a visit to St. Martin's Church in the quaint Dorset village of Wareham.

Strolling round the church, I noticed an effigy, like that of a medieval knight lying in his cloak. Going

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Well done!

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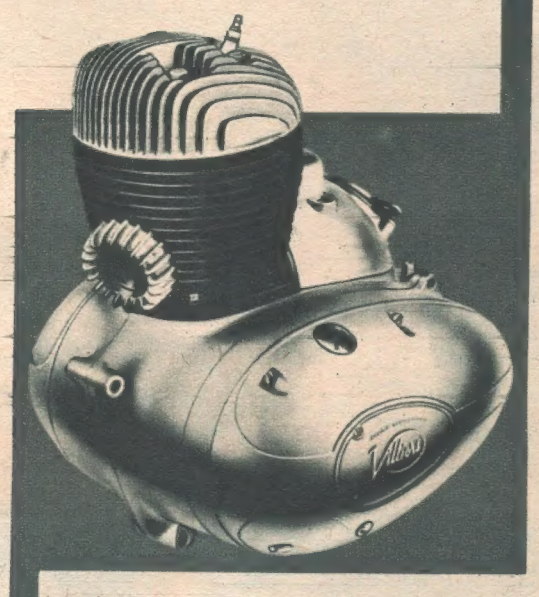

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IN FRONT

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

closer, I realized with astonishment that the figure was of Lawrence.—DORA KEMP, Townshend Terrace, Richmond, Surrey.

The effigy is a monument, carved and presented by a close friend of Lawrence — Eric Kennington, the sculptor. Lawrence, who took a keen interest in the restoration of St. Martin's, is buried at Moreton, about five miles away: his cottage, Clouds Hill, is in Moreton parish. This week's "Open To View" is on page 42.

Testimonial

I agree with the eighth citizen of Bernay ("Report From The Editor," JOHN BULL, February 18): Roger Touchard, the marksman who hoaxed France, should be allowed to keep his Legion of Honour.

At least it will show that the world hasn't lost the art of laughing at itself. — R. J. PEARSON, Brigg, Lincolnshire.

Out Of Character

Visiting some friends of mine on a poultry farm, I was amazed to find that when their cat was stroked it produced a noise exactly like a hen's clucking, instead of purring. The cat is trusted to wander among the chickens, and I can only assume that it has begun to copy them for some reason. — L. P. MILES, Mellor Street, Prestwich, Manchester.

. . . I am a dog lover, and the black Persian kitten I have been given seems to be developing dog habits.

She will retrieve fir cones forty or fifty times in succession, placing them at my feet and waiting expectantly after each throw.

When playing or pleased, she wags her tail, and when angry lashes it according to cat habit. — M. C. VICKERS, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire.

Revolutionary

Many years ago, people in the aircraft industry smiled indulgently when it was suggested that the propeller should pull an aircraft instead of pushing it.

Experience has changed their minds—yet shipbuilders cling to the past. Why not put a ship's propeller at the front? Surely it would make for more manoeuvrability, efficiency and stability.—C. WINDUST, Welldon Crescent, Harrow, Middlesex.

"Bow propulsion is generally less efficient," says an expert. "A ship drags water along with it, and some of the energy created by the moving water is used when the propeller is in the stern. A bow propeller would tend to increase the 'drag' of the ship and cause loss of speed. But bow propellers are sometimes fitted in addition to the stern propeller on special ships, such as ice-breakers."

Kristina's Death

The tragic death of Kristina in "The Long Walk" (JOHN BULL, February 11), moved me deeply.

I am curious to know what caused the swelling in her legs which spread and resulted in her death. — R. PIDGEON, Dover, Kent.

"Kristina probably died from beri-beri—a disease caused by vitamin deficiency—and from the effects of exposure," says a doctor. "Vitamin deficiency affects the legs because they are farthest from the heart; the blood plasma collects and causes swelling."

Mortgaged Hopes

My grandfather, who lives in Radway, in the Cotswolds, has a house with a strange history.

Many years ago, the story goes, an unpopular local resident was heard to say that if he had enough money, he would emigrate to America.

To the local people, this was too good a chance to miss, so they collected enough money to pay the man's passage. Unfortunately, however, the gift made the prospective emigrant feel that he was among real friends, so he stayed and built a house with the money.

The house, almost rebuilt and now my grandfather's, is still known to many old residents of Radway as America House.—R. E. SOTHCOTT, Eastern Green Road, Coventry.

Slow Or Stop

If we can't afford new roads, then we must do all we can in a small way to cut the terrifying annual toll of casualties.

One method would be to substitute "Halt" signs for "Slow" signs at all road junctions. I am sure this would help to save some lives. — MRS. M. E. T., Ashford Hill, Newbury, Berkshire.

"If all 'Slow' signs were replaced by 'Halt' signs, they would tend to be ignored," says the Automobile Association. "More notice is paid to signs that are used selectively. Indiscriminate use of them would only bring the system into disrepute."

Britain's first "Yield right of way" signs are being installed at Slough, Buckinghamshire. At some places they are replacing "Slow" or "Halt" signs, and motorists not observing them will be liable to prosecution.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

CONSIDERING how savage they are to each other, rugger players are a surprisingly amiable crowd. Why, they're even kind to referees, and they wouldn't dream of letting their girl friends become grass widows. When medieval gentlemen jousted, fair maidens tossed roses into the arena. Today they brew tea and make paste sandwiches . . . less romantic perhaps, but more comforting after a mudbath. Critchlow found his cover idea in the pavilion. "The score's always the same there," he says. "Thirty hungry men to feed."

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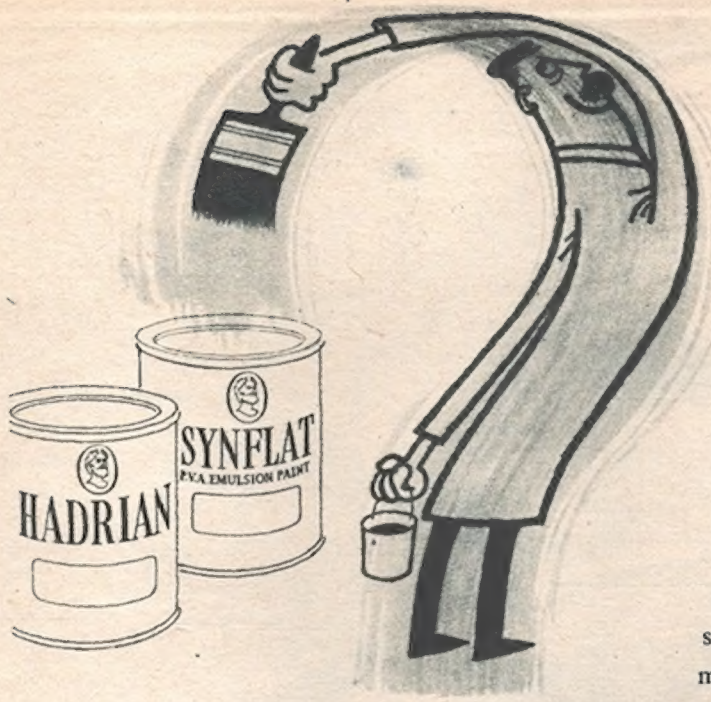

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Clogmat

This Is My Life

by EAMONN ANDREWS
as told to WILFRED GREATOREX

As far back as I can remember, in my native Dublin and in England, people have remarked on the touch of the blarney I'm said to possess and the luck of the Irish I'm said to have on my side—although it hasn't always been put quite so politely.

This came up several times that night last July when it turned out that producer Leslie Jackson, with others near and dear to me, had conspired behind my back to make me the subject of the first programme in the B.B.C.'s *This Is Your Life* series on television.

My mother, flown over from Ireland specially for the programme, even confided to interviewer Ralph Edwards and, incidentally, ten million viewers, that she realized from the moment I uttered my first baby cry that my tongue was already set for wagging. A few minutes before, as Edwards was picking me out of the studio audience to lead me upstage to face my past, Freddie Mills, whose life I was deluded the show was to be about, whispered, " Now—talk yourself out of this." I knew what he meant all right.

If there have been times when I've had a million words of blarney on the tip of my tongue to meet a situation, this was not one of them. I was too flabbergasted to take in much of what was said, too overcome with nerves and bewilderment to grasp the meaning of the occasion—the inter-round summary of my life, as someone called it.

From lunchtime that day, I had been set to watch Freddie Mills as closely as a teacher looking after a brood of children on a sightseeing tour of

Eamonn and his Irish wife, Grainne, in their flat near Hyde Park, London

Eamonn, the big brother of the Andrews family, plays in the garden with Noel (on his back) and Kathleen. Years later he wondered how the family had fitted into their tiny house

The Christian Brothers' School in Synge Street, Dublin. When Eamonn went there he was "big and soft," and his schoolmates were tough. He took lots of beatings without fighting back

Ena M. Burke taught Eamonn elocution at school—and helped him to conquer shyness

After seeing actor Micheal MacLiammoir, Eamonn and friends formed a drama group

London. To keep tags on Freddie I went everywhere—or nearly everywhere—with him. I went through the motions of taking part in a "phoney" sports panel programme with him, for which Leslie Jackson had laid on everything at Lime Grove, even to the cameras, crews, and make-up. I even took Freddie home to our flat at Lancaster Gate for dinner. He wasn't difficult, and in view of the fact that he knew, and I didn't know, that this was a "double take," this was not surprising.

I had seen Ralph Edwards doing the show in America, and knew all about the need for surprising the person whose life was to be televised. Yet once I was onstage, I could not understand how my family and closest friends could have kept it from me for so long. That was the shock of it, though I have since been able to see more rationally, as interviewer and co-perpetrator, how much *This Is Your Life* relies for its impact on gentle deceptions.

I wondered how Leslie Jackson had managed to keep my mother in London for a full twenty-four hours without her beating him to the punch and at least telephoning me. I wondered how my wife, Grainne, especially, had kept the whole thing quiet and beyond my suspicions. As I learned afterwards, she had her dicey moments. For some weeks, Grainne had been calling regularly at the doctor's each Friday, and not once had I been able to go round and collect her. This day *would* have to be different.

I left a message with our housekeeper, Alice, that I would drive Grainne home for lunch. Yet when I arrived, she had left; and on inquiring I was told that she had gone shopping. In fact, she was rehearsing her part in my life. Later, when a friend who was also with us for dinner had a conversation with Alice in her native German, I thought he was merely showing-off after his holiday in Austria, whereas Alice was telling him to get me off the premises so that Grainne could leave for the studio without my knowing.

WHEN Grainne did make her appearance on that stage, she asked me quietly: "Well, where's that second line of defence now?"

This is a factor in my life Grainne knows all about, one that I have always regarded as more dominant than all the so-called blarney and so-called Irish luck. All through the years, from late childhood, I've invariably sought and borne in mind a second line of defence in case the worst should happen in anything I do or try to do. Maybe it's a streak of pessimism, or realism, or escapism. When I played truant from my job as an insurance surveyor in Dublin to visit Belfast for material I needed for a broadcast the following week, I worked it out that the worst consequence would be the sack and having to line up in a dole queue.

There have been many times when the worst might have happened. Sometimes, in those early Dublin days, my mother would remind me that I was treading a tricky path. With the family, experience of years when there was unemployment all around them and other troubles, too, had left its mark. My mother and father both regarded the security of a regular job with a pension as preferable to an over-ambitious seeking after fame and fortune.

Even as a grown young man I often had this

Eamonn's family in their mother's home in Dublin. Left to right: Noel, Peggy, Mrs. Andrews, Tresa and Kathleen

made clear to me. And that night last July when I was trapped in front of the cameras without my second line of defence, my mother, as she came up to me, whispered: "I hope we haven't done wrong in not telling you about it. I'm still not sure."

My parents' preoccupation with security and a quiet, ordered family life was understandable. When I was born, their first child, on December 19, 1922, they had just lived through the stormiest period of modern Irish history, the 1916 insurrection and the bloody years that followed—and the memory of the terrible deeds of the notorious Black and Tans was still fresh in the people's minds.

As I grew up in a developing suburb of Dublin, I was to hear a lot about this disreputable task force. Sometimes my father would recall them, but never with rancour. He was a gentle, kindly carpenter with no bitterness in his heart, and his interests were concentrated on his work, his family and amateur theatricals. He was serious-minded, and would worry a lot, and I never knew his hair to be anything but grey.

In that year of my birth, the Irish Free State came into being and a leader destined for world fame named Eamon de Valera was playing his early, vital part in the building of the new republic outside the British Commonwealth. I do not know if I was named after him or, if I was, why my name has two "n's." It is possible that the "Eamonn" came from my paternal grandfather, Edward Andrews, for Eamonn is Gaelic for Edward.

All through my childhood, Ireland faced economic troubles. For years, it was a patriotic thing to burn turf in the domestic grate. It gave off a mountainy-sweet smell that pervaded our part of a large terraced house in Synge Street, so labelled after the Irish writer John Millington Synge. In that street George Bernard Shaw was born.

When I was five, we moved a short distance away to a slightly bigger house in Donore Avenue, Fairbrother's Fields, to make room for an extension to the Christian Brothers' School in Synge Street. Our new house had three bedrooms, but my father sacrificed one to make a bathroom.

Soon after our removal, my mother took me to school for the first time. We were greeted by an impressive kindly nun who must have been six feet tall, Sister Bonaventure. In class, she would kneel with a book open on her long black habit, and it was during these lessons that I first knew that I could pick out words—three letter words only, but the feeling was wonderful.

After three years, it was time for me to move on. There was a shortage of places at the Christian Brothers' School, but they fitted me in because our family had been displaced to allow their earlier extension. I was in for several shocks. I was big for my age and soft, and the boys at this school were tough. Soon, I was the butt of any boy when the fighting instinct took him. I wept and I never retaliated.

What was even worse was that as a by-product of the new national independence, the drive was on for bilingual teaching—in Gaelic and English. Gaelic had never been taught at the convent school, and I felt lost in class. I became a lonely and terribly shy child. Home was the place to be, and there I read voraciously; never the set school work, but books on nature. I started a notebook and went through a long period making copious notes on the otter. I sought books on it from the school library, and others from the public library in Kevin Street, and when I found I couldn't get enough, I did an illegal thing: I joined another branch of the library.

Even with a fiction and a non-fiction ticket at each, I could not get enough books. Several times I borrowed other people's tickets and dozens of books I read in a week. I filled pages of my notebook on the otter. Once or twice, the library assistants pulled me up, but I found I could bluff my way out quite easily.

At home the family was growing. Peggy came, then Kathleen, and Noel and Tresa, and it wasn't until many years later that I wondered how we all fitted into the tiny house. Even there, I tended to prefer my own company and spent many an evening in the front parlour which was reserved for special occasions which never arose. At table, my mother would often remark that I was reading again and I would put the book down reluctantly. One day I had an answer. "It's good for the digestion," I said. "It makes me eat more slowly."

School was an increasing burden, and when we moved into the secondary level where both mathematics and Latin were done through Gaelic it was much worse. I took no interest in homework, relying instead on going to school early the following morning in the hope that somebody would give me a "cog" from his exercises. At this stage I had only one close friend at school, but he couldn't help me in this regard: when the end-of-year examination results came out I was second last and he was bottom.

Though still handicapped by my late start in

When Eamonn took up acting, he joined Ria Mooney's school. He succeeded in wrecking their play. Ria later became producer at the Abbey Theatre

At his mother's home in Dublin, Eamonn plays cards with Joe Reynolds. With Reynolds, Eamonn made his first visits

Gaelic, I was fascinated by some of the folklore that the revival of the language had turned up. The tales of the *Fianna,* the traditional lands peopled with magic horses and giants seven feet high, appealed strongly, and there was Cu Chullainn, the great warrior of legend. I pictured the scene vividly as Cu Chullainn, in his last great battle, fought and killed so many opposing warriors that he had to tie himself to a post to keep on his feet, and even then fought so fiercely that nobody dared to go near him until the ravens landed on his shoulder and they knew that he was dead.

He was my great hero, and just for a short time I tried to emulate his drive—on the football and hurling fields. This merely gave some of the boys a better chance to knock me around legally, and they gave me a hell of a time. I drew within myself again, and my greatest enjoyment was to join my father on the motor bike he had bought. We went on great mystery tours around Dublin. I rode on the pillion with a mack over my head, and then he would stop and say: "Right! Take it off. Where are we?" I came to know the glory of Dublin Bay on a summer's morning this way, and such beauty spots as Rathfarnham and Dollymount, and once we went to Ringsend, where my father worked for the Electricity Supply Board.

One spring day, he took me to the Hellfire Club, a stone ruin topping one of the hills, and there told me the legend behind it; something about the boys gaming and carousing up there until somebody dropped a card and, looking down, they saw that one of the players had a club foot. They all sold their souls to the Devil and the place went up in smoke. It was a good story, but it seemed to be short of something, and for weeks afterwards I wondered about it.

My father was a deeply religious man, but that didn't stop him from remarking on my softness sometimes. He seemed to know all about the beatings I was taking at school, though I never reported them to him, and he was perturbed by my shyness. In the next class to me at school—three classes used to go on simultaneously in one large room—was a boy called Sean Tallon whose fighting prowess I envied. He was small and light and so dainty on his feet and handy with his fists that even the bullies learned to keep clear. In schoolyard fights, he was tremendous. A real fury he was, and watching him from the ringside circle of fight-mad schoolboy admirers filled me with respect and awe. I felt my own shortcomings, and it didn't help when for some strange reason I became a choirboy—at St. Theresa's in Donore Avenue. It was with the choir that I did my first broadcast, and there was a lot of excitement at home because we had no wireless and my father set about building a crystal set.

AFTER evening practices, and at other times, the choirboys displayed the usual gentility of their kind by making life as intolerable as possible for the church clerk, John Kenny. He was a young man with masses of black wavy hair, but he looked older than his years, and the regular duty imposed on him of having to chase wayward choirboys off the premises while wearing his ankle length soutane probably had something to do with this.

No sooner had he run us out of the grounds than we would be back. Usually, I took up a safe position farthest away from the church door in order to have at least ten yards' start on the rest after one of them had heaved on the bellrope hanging outside the church and let off a great peal in the middle of mass. The temptation grew to clang it myself.

One evening, with the rest watching me and keeping an eye on the transept door from which Kenny would inevitably appear, I took a grip as high above my head as I could, heaved, and heard the echoing, discordant note. Then, before I could release myself, I was being pulled up, soaring feet off the ground with the recoil. I was still hanging in the air when Kenny arrived. Half pulling, half lifting me down, he laid me across his knee and gave me the biggest hiding I had experienced since a boy called Fergus had pulverized me in the schoolyard. Yet it was my pride, not my backside, that hurt most. To my surprise, I was more popular with the other boys, both in choir and school, after that.

Ten minutes' walk from our house, across the canal, the town broadened out into fields, acres of them, with only scattered houses and apple orchards. We took to raiding these and then ran for it, and although we were never caught I always felt that I was the most conspicuous because of my size. This also applied in street football. The police would descend on us in twos, but they hadn't a chance. We knew the side streets better than they did. It became trickier when they were mobilized on bicycles, and the summonses that resulted in fines of half a crown or five shillings were regarded as a real disgrace in the neighbourhood. Mothers fondly imagined that their sons could not possibly be involved, and that it was something that could happen only to rougher boys.

Despite these escapades, my closest friend at this time was my cousin Joe Clarke, my mother's sister's son who lived over on the north side of the city. I used to look forward to his visits, and sometimes we would save up fourpence and go to the pictures together.

One Christmas, we were given an airgun between us and, after regular orders to be careful in its use, we took it out one day towards the open fields. On the way, I spotted a man walking up the street some fifty yards away. I said, "Watch this!" I took aim, all the time thinking that the gun wouldn't fire so far, and then pressed the trigger. The man staggered, clutching his head. I thought I could see a big lump coming up on the back of his skull. I was terrified, and so shaken that I turned away, unable to stand the sight. Joe went white, and not a word did he say all the way home. We said nothing about it there, either, and as far as I remember we never used the gun again. It was like having killed somebody, and I kept thinking that if the man had turned round I might have robbed him of an eye.

Although I had been getting about more with the boys, I was still shy—and I loathed school. At thirteen, I had made so little progress that my teacher invited my father to the school and there was some talk of my leaving. My father would have none of it, however, and it was agreed that I should be kept back in the same class for a year. What happened after that

his cousin, Joe Clarke (left) and Irish writer to the theatre—with seats at ninepence a time

depended on me: unless I won a scholarship, I would have to leave or, if I stayed on, my education would no longer be free.

Coming back after the holidays, we found we had a new teacher, a great giant of a man at least six foot three inches tall with snow white hair and a fierce countenance, whom we called The Badger. Brother Madden was his name, and he instantly struck terror into my heart. A firm disciplinarian, he gave the impression that he could read one's innermost thoughts. When he left the classroom he would say: "I'll be gone ten minutes, but I'll know everything that's happened." I believed him.

Soon Madden formed a scholarship class, and as only a handful of awards was available, I was neither hopeful nor interested. My father constantly drove home to me the consequences of leaving school, and his greatest argument was that I would finish up "as a messenger boy and nothing else." This did not unduly alarm me, but Madden did. After that first year under him, I finished second from the top of the class instead of in my usual position near the other end, and my languages had improved beyond expectation. Even in Gaelic I came out high.

Madden put me in for a scholarship, and I got through. It took the form of cheques made payable to me from Dublin Corporation for school fees and the cost of books. When the first one came, I made a great play of endorsing it for my father. I felt that I was earning money.

I WAS now studying hard and also writing a lot of poetry, of which I was proud, and I was even more inclined to shyness than before. One morning, I turned up early for school and there was still ten minutes to go before classes began. In the main hall, some slight contretemps arose between me and another boy, a flame-haired Dubliner as big as myself but with a temper and a more fluent tongue, and soon we were having a slanging match. He raised his fists menacingly, but I didn't think he really meant any violence until he caught me with a tremendous right swing on the chin.

I thought the roof had fallen in. I hit the floorboards, and was too shocked to do any more than pick myself up, and too terrified to consider retaliation. He threw me a contemptuous look, and felt his honour had been saved. This one-sided one-rounder troubled me for the rest of the day and, as I was going home, I saw Sean Tallon also leaving, swinging his satchel. If I had been as much of a fighter as Sean, the redhead would never have risked going for me like that—and, sure, he would never have gone for Sean, big as he was.

I had tried to pick up hints by watching Sean's schoolyard fights, but nobody would take him on any more. I had heard, though, that he boxed in official competitions under the Queensberry Rules, and when his next contest came up I went to see him. Next morning, I was talking to another boy about the way Sean had boxed, and he suggested that we might join the St. Andrew's Boxing Club together. It was there, he said, that Sean had learned to look after himself.

It was sixpence a week, and I went to the basement club in York Street three nights a week for lessons and practice. I learned to hit back when I was hurt. I learned how to take a punch without running away. And when I was sixteen, pressing seventeen, the club entered me for the County Dublin Juvenile Championships. At school, I said nothing about my new interest. Somehow, I reached the finals of the 10 st. 7 lb. division—and won the title.

The morning after our teacher, Brother Carew, a rocklike little fellow with a sharp wit, came into the classroom and picked up a newspaper from his desk. One of the boys had put it there with a pencilled ring round a paragraph recording my boxing win. He scanned

Continued on page 45

Fooled into thinking that Freddie Mills was the first victim for *This Is Your Life*, Eamonn Andrews took him to the studio. To his horror, Eamonn was dragged on to the stage himself

THE GIRL WHO HATED

by ***MARK DERBY***

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

She had betrayed the man who loved her—sent him into an ambush. Now her life was in his hands . . .

SEVERAL times through the night Lloyd had given his "alert" signal and the ambush party had roused from their patient rain-sodden misery while tension climbed like a fever graph and then, after a few minutes, dropped back into apathy again. But the tension graph had hit a lower peak each time, and fallen faster and steeper.

Hours ago all except Ahmed, the only greenhorn in the party, had written this off as another dead ambush, another moonlit night of wasted sleep with nothing to bring home in the morning. Now the *wah-wahs'* treetop dawn chorus was dying down, and they were all waiting for the order to move.

In fact, Lloyd had been within seconds of ordering the move back to base when the figure appeared at the end of the tunnel-like path commanded by his lookout position. It came as a shock, because from the first he'd expected nothing of this show. He hadn't selected the position himself and he distrusted the information on which the ambush had been laid. Plenty of terrorists in the area, he knew that. There always were, up here near the Malayan-Siamese frontier. But this was surely too obvious a path for them to use.

He'd been nagged, too, by a hunch that the terrorists knew they were there, might even be laying an ambush for them on their move basewards. But the hunch dropped dead at sight of the slim figure in a tattered jungle green shirt with an old heavy Number IV rifle coming down the path. It was light enough now for hand signals, so he gave the alert to the others, who were unable to see down the path beyond its one slight bend.

And of course the clumsy greenhorn Ahmed had to scrape his carbine muzzle along a limestone ledge, rousing an echo in the green-black silence like a searchlight opening up in a starless sky.

The terrorist froze and stared, in full view of Lloyd's weary grey eyes behind their leaf screen, but still out of sight of the others. Then deliberately he laid down his old rifle in the olive moss at his feet, threw off the tattered cotton bandolier, drew a white handkerchief from his trouser pocket, raised both hands, the right holding the handkerchief, and advanced slowly to the bend.

A captured or surrendered terrorist was worth two or three dead ones. Lloyd's spirits rose. He signalled back to the party to hold their fire, repeating the signal deliberately for the benefit of clumsy Ahmed, and just as the stiff, cautiously stepping figure turned the bend he called an order.

"Halt!"

But he might have known it. At sight of the enemy Constable Ahmed's trigger finger had taken over, while his brain went blank with excitement. Five shots rang out, and the slender figure fell sideways while the white handkerchief fluttered to a perch on a branch of murderous thorns. . . .

Back at the police station, while Constable Ahmed fell asleep at last on his *charpoy* with the taunts of his squadmates still stinging his ears, Lloyd in his small room upstairs faced the man Ahmed's burst of fire had characteristically missed by yards.

When he'd recovered from the faint that had dropped him as the bullets flew round him, the surrendered terrorist had given his name as Kee Chang Choy. After a shower and a meal he still showed signs of shock.

He was a good-looking youngster of nineteen, dark, head close cropped, face pale from his eight months in the jungle's gloom, with the deceptive shyness and almost feminine delicacy that so often overlays the ancestral toughness of the healthy young Chinese. Shock still gave him a sick, lost look, and Lloyd suspected that the burst of off-aim fire was insufficient to account for that degree of shock in a youth so sound physically.

He was right.

"May I take another cigarette?" The quiet, polite voice spoke in the good, clipped English he had learned at school in Ipoh. "So much has been happening . . . I'm not myself," he added apologetically.

LLOYD pushed across cigarettes and his lighter and said: "Tell me what decided you to surrender."

The terrorist—the ex-terrorist—drew at the cigarette before he answered. "I think I was never a good Communist," he said, blinking through the smoke. "I joined the People's Army because my friend wanted to and—I don't know—the call of the future, maybe. But when I woke up to what it was all about I grew up a little. The two of us got separated, drafted to different units, and three months ago I heard my friend had surrendered. Ever since then I've wanted to get out. Except that——"

He was looking older now, frowning down at his bare feet with the marks of old leech bites on them like a rash. Lloyd waited.

Impulsively then the boy looked at him and asked, "I suppose you've been in love?"

Lloyd frowned, too, and said nothing.

"Because if you haven't you won't understand how it was. In our platoon there's a girl. Lee Lan. And I . . . well, you know. . . . I'm in love with her and it's been like that for months. But in the army that sort of thing's absolutely out, of course. If the platoon commander had known, we'd have been sent to units a hundred miles apart."

Yes, Lloyd knew that. Though there were scores of women in the terrorist army, even

Slowly the terrorist approached. As he reached the bend near the leaf-screened lookout post, Lloyd called, "Halt!"

husbands and wives were sometimes separated.

"So it's been like hell, only having odd minutes alone together. But I was sure she felt exactly the same about me as I did about her, and yesterday I asked her to run away with me, escape from the jungle and give ourselves up. I'd read those leaflets the planes drop and I knew the government makes it easy if you surrender, so long as you haven't taken part in atrocities. So I asked her to escape with me."

He went silent then, staring grimly at his leech-bitten ankles.

"And?" Lloyd prompted.

The boy's chin jerked up and he stared full into the lieutenant's tired grey fighter's eyes.

"She denounced me to the platoon commander."

Lloyd saw the wound then, the deep, ugly wound behind the young brown eyes. "So you escaped alone," he said.

"No." Chang Choy jumped out of his chair and crossed to the window, turning his slim back on Lloyd, gripping each side of the wide window and staring out across the jungle-smothered hills. "No, they sent me with a letter to the Min Yuen chief in Mekong village. Along the path leading through your ambush."

Lloyd blinked. "Then they did know we were there! I had a hunch."

"They knew. I didn't. A Min Yuen scout had come in before midnight and given the platoon commander a report."

"You mean, your platoon commander just used our ambush as a firing squad?"

"He meant to. Well, you saw what was in that letter I was supposed to be taking to the support chief at Mekong." It was on the table between them: a blank sheet of paper.

"When they heard those shots they believed I'd been eliminated. I wonder if she. . . ." His voice trailed off and his eyes stared blindly down over the sun-scorched police station, *atap*-thatched and surrounded by the high apron wire fence, the hundred laundered jungle green shirts and slacks drying on bushes behind the detention compound, and the village dogs in a tense crescent round the cookhouse door.

He spun round suddenly with a hard, urgent face. "I know about that fighting unit you have, made up of surrendered Communists. Well, I want to join it—later. But tonight I want to go back and get that platoon commander. He always wanted Lee Lan for himself—I could see that. I can see also, now, why he tried to

Eight-page Detachable Supplement

Percy Thrower watches as Richard Dimbleby divides a clump of roots

RICHARD DIMBLEBY

and

PERCY THROWER

introduce

John Bull's

EASTER GUIDE FOR WEEKEND GARDENERS

ALL over Britain, gardeners are preparing for their busiest Easter for years. The weather has caused weeks of delay in the job of getting the garden straight for summer.

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IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

get rid of me so quickly without a trial. He wanted me out of the way before he went off to meet the delegate tonight. He wasn't going to leave Lee Lan for two nights with me around."

"The delegate?" Lloyd's interest had sharpened.

"From China." Deep buried in his love and shock and hate, the boy was scarcely aware of the sensation he was causing. "He has no idea I knew about that. Two nights ago I couldn't sleep because I had a suspicion he'd called Lee Lan to his *basha*. So I crept along and got close enough to hear it was actually a man in there with him, some sort of messenger from H.Q. Ordering him to meet this delegate and take him over from the group that's guiding him through South Siam and then hand him over to a bodyguard twenty-five miles farther south. I know where he's going to meet the delegate, and I know the first part of the route he's going to guide him over."

Lloyd was excited, despite his tiredness. "What's this delegate's name?" he asked.

Chang Choy shook his head. "He's some sort of V.I.P., from the sweat it's put the platoon commander into. Oh yes, he's ambitious, that devil!" He threw up his chin again. "Give me a gun and I'll get him for you."

Lloyd was on his feet, stretching night-cramped muscles with a frown. He unrolled a map-sheet. It showed a section of the jungle border country east of Kroh and Grik.

"Show me the rendezvous and the first part of the route south," he said. . . .

THEY had moved fast. For Lloyd this was his second night in ambush positions, with a day's hard work in between. For Chang Choy nothing counted—sleeplessness, hunger, danger—nothing but his hate. The two of them, with a pair of veterans of a hundred ambushes, Corporal Jaafar and Constable Omar, had crouched for five hours in the cold upland valley down which the delegate was to be led in the sunrise hour.

Chang Choy had impressed them on the march. There was nothing they could teach him in the way of jungle-bashing. His movement was almost as silent and tireless as a Dyak tracker's, and he showed not a single sign of fatigue. Now, as the light from the dawn-yellow sky faded, they dominated a narrow river crossing.

Lloyd turned a glance towards the face that was close by his right shoulder. It was grimly set, the eyes fixed on the steep track that descended diagonally to the stream. Their bodies were covered with tiny wounds, ant bites, leech bites, mosquito bites, the dig and rip of powerful thorns, inflammation from the touch of poisonous leaves. It had rained devastatingly for thirty minutes and the rain had washed the sweat out of their uniforms, leaving them dismally chilled. The craving for a cigarette had nagged them for hours.

The boy became aware of his enemy's approach a full minute before Lloyd. Lloyd's swift glance then towards Omar on his left and the corporal behind the boulder on the far side of the path assured him that they had heard, too. He was still cold in his damp uniform, but his trigger finger began to sweat as it always did.

He heard a new sound then, heavy and rhythmic but muffled almost to silence. It was a moment before he realized that it was Chang Choy's heart-beat, close by his right ear as they crouched together under a canopy of huge wild banana leaves. A broken heart maybe, but dancing at the near approach of revenge.

Until that moment a jungle peak had screened the little river from the newly risen sun; but now yellow sunlight fell on the branches at the top of the opposite bank and began to cascade slowly, like molten lava, towards the water. On its way it threw long shadows of the approaching enemy party down the path to the stream

"I asked her to escape with me," the boy said. Lloyd saw the hurt that lay behind his eyes . . .

several seconds before their figures appeared.

Their pointed shadows slid slowly down the path and then they emerged from behind a screen of giant flowering grasses. First a youth even slimmer than Chang Choy, overburdened with an old Japanese rifle. Next a stiff, older figure with a bitter grey mask of a face under the red-starred green bandit cap, carrying a captured American carbine. And finally a stout, short figure in a different shade and cut of jungle green.

Lloyd had planned to open fire when the delegate, if he could be spotted, reached the foot of the path, so long as the group weren't so strung out as to bring the leading guide too close to their rather lightly screened positions.

His fire would be the signal for Jaafar and Omar to open up. This was ideal, only three in the party and so unwisely bunched that they offered a concentrated target.

Lloyd watched as the party began to walk down the path. He took the first pressure on his trigger. One of the figures turned to give a supporting hand to the stout delegate down the slippery path. For once, Lloyd reflected grimly, absolutely according to plan. . . .

He opened fire.

For a wild fraction of a second he had no idea of what had happened. I'm wounded, he told himself dazedly, his body thrown into an ague by his carbine's automatic fire, teeth clenched to stop them chattering. Somehow his head had jerked back sharply and he was staring up at an unsteady line of holes puncturing the huge, drooping banana leaf above him.

Then his brain snapped into focus. It was his own fire that was drilling those holes through the leaf. His carbine had been jerked violently off-aim as he opened fire, throwing his whole body backwards. And it was Chang Choy who had done it. The young devil was just snatching his burned hand from the hot barrel of the carbine.

The suspicion that Chang Choy had led him into a trap flashed only half-way through his mind before he threw it out. He trusted the boy. No, of course he'd simply gone mad at the sight of the platoon commander and grabbed at the gun to snatch revenge into his own hands.

"Crazy young fool!" He could almost have turned the gun on him.

Across the river the delegate had fallen in the mud. Either he'd merely slipped or else he'd been wounded by the corporal's or Omar's fire. The platoon commander was trying to drag him into cover. Lloyd steadied himself and opened up on the pair of them as they rolled into the scrub that edged the water.

Three seconds later silence returned to the valley.

The delegate's twisted foot protruded from the scrub and the platoon commander, the starred cap fallen from his close-shaven head, had rolled into the shallows and lay quite still. The other member of the party had vanished.

Not until he'd taken the sealed plastic wallet of papers from the delegate's bush jacket pocket did Lloyd remember Chang Choy, and then it was with a quick frown and renewed fury. His crazy antic could have sunk them all. But the furious outburst was choked in his throat as he turned back across the river and saw how it was with the boy.

He was lying slack and still, his eyes closed. Jaafar and Omar stood over him. Shaken and curiously moved, Lloyd bent over the badly wounded boy. Before he could think of anything to say Chang Choy opened his eyes and spoke.

"Did she get away?"

And Lloyd finally understood why his gun had been wrenched off-aim in the moment of opening fire. He glanced up the great slope of lonely jungle into which the young terrorist, slimmer and younger even than Chang Choy, had vanished.

"Yes, she got away," he answered.

It was all Chang Choy had been waiting for. He closed his eyes again like a reassured child going to sleep. . . .

"You're all in, my boy," his chief said as Lloyd walked straight out from under the shower and sank streaming on to his bed. "Get some sleep." Reluctantly he'd sent off the delegate's wallet of documents by special messenger to headquarters for onward transmission to the intelligence chiefs. In the doorway he turned and said: "So the kid who guided you there stopped a packet? Who shot him—his girl friend?"

Lloyd turned on his wet pillow. "Must have been. Neither of the men got off a single round." And he added: "He was a sound youngster, you know, in his way."

"He was a terrorist."

"A poor one, though. Badly miscast. I'm surprised he lasted that long with them, with that . . . flaw running right through him."

"Flaw?"

"A fatal flaw. He was human."

His chief said nothing and after a moment Lloyd repeated, "He was human. He fell in love when he'd been ordered not to. He wanted to choose his own future. And worst of all, when it came to the point, he loved stronger than he hated."

"Pity he was on the wrong side."

Exhaustion was misting Lloyd's brain, slurring his words. "Yes, he didn't belong there."

His chief gave a busy man's short sigh. "That's the tragedy, my boy. Most of them don't belong there. Now you get some sleep."

Lloyd sighed and slept. THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

With his long, thrusting stroke, McKechnie ploughs through the water. His coach expects him to break the world quarter-mile record this summer

A schoolboy trains to out-swim the world

Young Neil McKechnie has a three-year plan to make swimming history. . . . He's well ahead of schedule by HILARY AGATE

Neil swam for Britain between papers of his G.C.E. examination. He makes up for lost schooltime with extra work at home

ONE evening last August, six of Britain's finest swimmers dived into the water at a Blackpool baths to race for the national quarter-mile title during the annual Amateur Swimming Association championships. From the banks of seats round the pool, followers of sixteen-year-old Neil McKechnie, a Wallasey schoolboy, watched disconsolately as he failed to take the lead in his usual tearaway style. Olympic swimmer Bob Sreenan, a Scot from Dundee, made the pace; McKechnie, using a longer, slower stroke, swam two or three yards behind.

Sreenan led for length after length, but McKechnie, apparently unperturbed and never bothering to lift his head to look at the Dundee man, remained by his heels. As they turned for the last length, Sreenan and McKechnie touched the end of the pool together.

"Suddenly Neil spurted," says McKechnie's coach, Frank Parrington. "His stroke quickened without losing its length and he shot away from Sreenan like a torpedo."

McKechnie won the race by several yards. Sreenan's own time was his best-ever for the distance.

A former British champion who saw the race says: "Young Neil completely fooled Sreenan by not adopting his usual tactics of taking an early lead. The race showed that he is a mature swimmer ready to step up into world class."

McKechnie, a six feet two inches, fourteen stone Anglo-Scot with a slow, shy smile and a frame that swells powerfully beneath his school blazer, has made amateur swimming history—all competitive swimming in this country, except Channel racing, is amateur—by winning sixteen senior and junior British and English records in two and a half years. At one time last year he held six English records simultaneously, and he now holds all but one of the English free-style records between 100 yards and a mile.

"For his age Neil is the greatest British swimmer of all time," says ex-Olympic star Austin Rawlinson. "His potentialities are unlimited."

Last summer McKechnie swam five times for England and Britain in international matches, won two senior national titles and created six senior records—yet not three years ago he was an untrained swimmer who could only just manage four lengths of a pool.

One day in April, 1953, a school friend who

Continued on page 50

nylon is changing ways and means

Men who produce plutonium depend on nylon for protection: the fluff-free surface of nylon overalls cannot harbour radio-active dust and makes laundering quick, easy and efficient. Nylon harnesses horsepower and keeps it running: transmission belts, spindle bands and drop stamp belts last longer and need less maintenance. Nylon fabrics sift flour, crush seeds, ice cakes and actively support the clean food drive. Nylon membranes prevent evaporation losses in petrol storage tanks. Wherever it goes to work, nylon adds greater efficiency to vital tasks, cuts fuel and replacement bills, increases productivity, spreading satisfaction all along the production-line, in accounts departments and at board-room tables.

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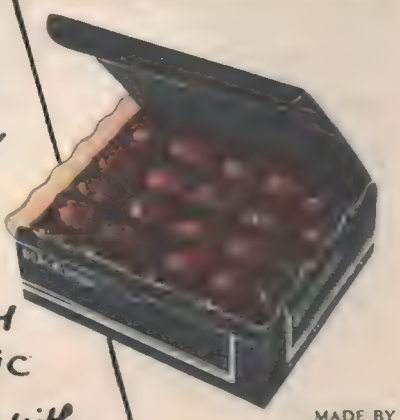
nothing like *nylon* for doing it better

2/

felt so silly. I couldn't dance because of my ankle, and my hair was a mess, and I couldn't think of anything witty to say – in fact, what impressed him I can't think, but something must have because next day he sent me a box of gorgeous Black Magic chocolates (Oh, how I'm enjoying those centres!) with



MADE BY ROWNTREES

THE REST OF THE STORY

There are two reasons why Black Magic chocolates are worth writing home about. First, those really luscious centres. And then, however much you pay, you won't find *better* chocolates than Black Magic. This is because Rowntrees put all the value into the *chocolates*, packing them simply, but elegantly, in a smart black box.

Out of the storm

by ***EDWARD LINDALL***

ILLUSTRATED BY NIVEN

For a split-second something close to panic leaped in his eyes. "Look behind," he said

Greg watched the tribesmen approach and waited for their spears to strike. He had set out to kill them. Now he lay at their mercy . . . and so did his wife

WHEN Lucy had pulled her plunging horse away, Greg Anders dismounted slowly and picked his rifle out of the white, powdery dust where she had knocked it. He moved slowly because it was a way of holding in his anger, and his quarry had disappeared anyhow.

"That was a fool thing to do," he said bleakly. "One of us might've got hurt."

"I came along to stop you," Lucy Anders said. "I'm going to do it."

Greg slammed the rifle back in its scabbard. His eyes were hard. He was young, brown with the sun like his wife, but whereas she was slim and rounded, he was whipcord all squared off.

When Lucy had jumped her horse into him he had got the tribal blacks in his rifle sights for the first time. Twenty or thirty near-naked men scattering for cover in the broken lands in the centre of the saltpan. He had wanted to give them a taste of lead, head them off and chase them clear across the pan—another fifteen miles of blistering torture for men on foot.

Now they would hole up somewhere in that wild confusion of rocks. Driving them out wouldn't be easy. It was late afternoon and they were a hunting party. Some offshoot of the numerous Aruntas, deadly accurate with their spears and boomerangs.

"I'm going in after those thieving scum," he said harshly. "They need a lesson. And they're going to get it."

"They need food," Lucy snapped. Her voice was thin and high, her blue eyes were bright with nervous intensity. "The drought's hit them too. Ruined their hunting. What d'you expect them to do? Lie down and die?"

Greg swung himself into the saddle. "They can do what they like about that," he grated. "But they're not spearing our cattle."

They had found the stripped carcass of the steer early that morning. The sight of it had outraged every instinct of his training.

He had been raised in this harsh northern Australian cattle country, reared in the belief that a man's cattle were sacrosanct. Stealing or spearing them were unforgivable sins.

He had spent hours circling for tracks before he found the woomera, a spear-throwing stick, five hundred yards inside the saltpan. That was all the sign he needed. With the cunning of born tacticians, the natives had headed for the dead heart of that waterless and shadeless pan, thinking the white man wouldn't dare to follow.

Well, Greg thought grimly, he had dared! And now he had to follow them still farther—into ambush terrain. He hadn't sufficient food and water to sit tight and blockade them. Either he went in now or they got away.

He swung round on Lucy, taut with frustrated anger because he knew she was going to follow him and he couldn't stop her any more than he could stop himself. But she looked so tired that the anger died in him. Her body, normally so erect and vibrant, drooped in the saddle. The man's shirt she wore, the riding breeches, were stained with white dust.

"Why don't you go back?" he said.

"Give up this terrible idea and we'll both go."

"Lucy!" He put out a hand to touch her, but she moved her arm away. "Please try to

understand. If I don't fight we might as well sell up and get out."

"Let's get out then," she said tersely. "Human life means more to me than a few cattle."

Greg's jaw tightened. This was a thing he had to do to protect them both, and it had opened a gulf of bitterness. All their savings had gone into buying Marble Hill station. All the hopes of their year-old marriage were bound up in it.

The drought, now in its sixth month, meant worry and expense. It meant each animal was precious. It meant these natives had to be shown that spearing a white man's cattle meant big trouble.

"You don't know what you're saying," he grated. "Give up everything for the sake of some half-naked blacks?"

"Let them kill enough to eat," Lucy said. "Try to make friends instead of enemies."

"Kindness is weakness to them," Greg said. "Force is the only thing they understand."

"How d'you know? Have you tried anything else? Have the cattlemen ever done anything but chase them away with guns?"

Greg didn't answer because they were hopelessly at odds and talking wouldn't solve a thing. He urged his horse forward.

"Greg! Don't go in."

Lucy's voice was intense. There was a tremble of anxiety in it that gave him a quick thrill of pleasure. But he forced himself not to look at her because it might weaken his resolve. "I have to go in," he said.

"You've chased them far enough. They're scared. They won't come near our land again."

There was such entreaty in her voice that suddenly he felt ashamed. In the bitterness of argument he had almost forgotten the things that were between them. The deep, shared things. He swung around, hands out-stretched in urgent supplication.

"I must. . . . Can't you see——?" Then his body stiffened, and for a split-second something close to panic leaped in his eyes. But when he spoke his voice was steady. "Look behind you."

TOGETHER they stared aghast at the great rolling wall of dust. High as the sky and wider than they could see; red with the plain's dust and streaked with the white of the saltpan. Gradually they heard the driving wind. A growl at first, rising to a roar that held the noise of countless tons of dust grinding together.

This was the searing, choking scourge of the northern summer, whipped up by fierce thermal currents off the drought-baked plains. While they blew, nothing could move; and slow suffocating death was often the penalty of being caught in the open.

Greg hauled his horse about. "Quick! The rocks!"

The wind caught them and almost hurled them around the big rock he picked out. Then it followed, grinding the dust into their faces, throwing dust devils up under their horses until they were plunging and squealing in frenzy.

"Peg 'em down!" Greg yelled. "Near the rock!"

He leaped for the ground and as his feet struck he heard a piercing scream. Almost at the same instant a great mass of dust belched over him. A thousand needles stung his eyes. He forced them open and through the murk saw Lucy on the ground. Her horse was gone. He plunged towards her, and at that moment his own horse reared, whistling in terror. It caught him off balance and the reins tore free. He stumbled and fell.

"Lucy. . . !" His voice was swept away. His mouth was filled with dust. "Lucy. . . !" He scrambled across to her, fear a cold emptiness in all that heat.

"My foot. . . ." Her lips were against his ear as he scooped her up, but only disconnected words were audible—". . . stamped on it. . . ."

Greg propped her against the lee side of the rock. The dust was so thick he could only just see her face, but they were out of the wind. He unlaced her riding boot and eased it off. Her teeth were clenched on her lower lip, but she made no sound. Then he rolled down the sock, and the foot was bad. Blue-black already, and swelling fast.

"Maybe we'll find the horses later," she said. "When the storm's over."

Greg shook his head slowly. There was no hope of ever finding them alive.

"No," he said gently. "We won't see them alive again."

He began putting back her sock and boot, watching his fingers because he was unwilling to meet her eyes. They were afoot, ten scorching miles from the soak, and she was lame. Their food and reserve water had been on the saddles, and they were left with only two small belt canteens. Even worse than that, his rifle had gone, too. And when this great dust curtain had rolled away the natives would know it.

Hours passed in dreadful, choking misery. They clung together, pressing tightly against the rock where the air was a little clearer. Their ears were clogged with dust and the insensate roaring of the storm became unreal and distant. The dust stopped up their nostrils and breathing was a struggle under their handkerchief masks.

The skin of their faces was drum-tight and sore, as though the abrasive dust were stripping it off. Finally, nothing existed outside their blinding world of misery. Time was an endless

He trickled water through her lips. "Lucy!" His voice was hoarse with fear. She whispered: "You'll have to go on alone. I can't walk any more"

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NEVIL SHUTE

EACH new book by Nevil Shute adds to his world-wide reputation. His novels sell in hundreds of thousands. His work is known to millions of discerning readers, who appreciate his sensitive writing and his sympathetic portraits of the twentieth century. Already JOHN BULL has serialized four of Nevil Shute's brilliant stories. Now comes his latest novel . . .

Beyond The Black Stump

The title is Australian slang. It means "Beyond the boundaries of civilization." That is where the story is set—in the great untamed Outback of Australia, where men struggle to win Nature's treasures from a harsh and sun-parched land. Among these people, rugged and hospitable, with their own strange rules of morality, comes Stanton Laird, a young American searching for oil. . . .

There is great human drama in the impact this world has on Laird, and his own effect on those who live there—The Judge, a peculiar, wise old drunkard; Pat Regan, a sheep farmer who escaped from his native Ireland with a price on his head; and Mollie, the farmer's lovely red-headed daughter. . . .

Beyond The Black Stump is the picture of a wild, exciting world and its "uncivilized," kindly people. It is much more, too: an intensely moving story, told with sympathy and charm, a story not to be missed. It begins . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

blob of hours that had gummed together, lost identity and all significance.

Then suddenly, almost as suddenly as a light switched on, the storm was gone. And they could hear it tearing towards the far hills like a train.

Greg staggered to his feet and stood swaying, trying to adjust himself to the clean air. It was night, and the sky was bright with wetly winking stars. The crescent moon had slid far down, and the night was sliding with it.

He looked at Lucy, lying against the rock, flanked by smooth ribbed banks of dust. He tried to speak, but his tongue was too dry and swollen. He unhitched his canteen, fumbling, knelt and put it to her lips.

"Take a mouthful and hold it," he said, compelling his tongue to make a threadbare sort of noise. "Take your time." He watched her anxiously through red, bleared eyes. "You're all right?"

SHE nodded, swallowed the water and took two more mouthfuls. "I'm alive," she whispered. "I must be all right."

Then he drank, too. Between pulls he watched her guardedly, and she was far from being all right. Her face was ashen, her slim body boneless with weariness. Even without an injured foot, she was far from being all right.

His own body was stiff and sore, as though it had been beaten heavily. His remaining strength was brittle. But he knew they had to get moving. With their scant water they had to start out for the soak without delay. And somewhere behind them, amid the rocks, the natives would be sorting themselves out. Soon they'd come scouting. . . .

Greg hitched the canteen on his belt. "Let's go." He slid a hand under Lucy's elbow to give her some support. "About two hours to sun-up. We'll make the most of it."

She turned her head as they moved off. Her face was brave with pain. "It's grim, isn't it?"

Greg didn't answer immediately. Hell was waiting for them when the sun came up and caught them on that shadeless saltpan, miles from the water soak. Even if Lucy's foot held up they were going to know the tortures of slow frying. And whether it held up or not, their chance of outdistancing the natives was desperately slim.

Fear of his gun would probably keep them in the rocks until daybreak. Then their hunters' eyes would instantly pick up the two white folk struggling across the pan.

Greg reckoned on a two-hour start, if they could get away without observation.

"It'll be hard slogging," he said tautly. "But we'll make a big fire when we hit the soak. They'll see the smoke at the homestead and come out."

He didn't want to voice his fears. Lucy was going to have enough to contend with without them.

"Tell me the truth," she said evenly.

"The natives might get nasty," he admitted cautiously.

"D'you blame them? After what we've done?"

"No," he said. "But let's get moving. Maybe we can keep ahead. They'll be in bad shape. I kept them on the run all yesterday, and the storm must've sapped them plenty."

Lucy half-turned to him. "Poor things. Isn't there something we can do to help?"

"Help them?" Greg's voice was incredulous. "If I *could* do anything, I wouldn't."

She pulled her arm away then, not angrily, but with a measured contempt. She didn't speak. She went ahead of him, limping badly without his supporting hand.

Her pain hurt Greg badly, but there was nothing he could do about it. The contempt he had seen on her face hurt him even more, but he couldn't do anything about that either.

He glanced around at intervals, watching for the natives to break cover, but there was no sign. The rocks thrust upwards from deep pools of shadow. They looked like drawings he had seen of the wastelands of the moon.

AN hour passed and Lucy was still on her feet. Then she stumbled and nearly fell. She recovered quickly, before Greg could reach her, but her limp was worse. And he knew the pain must have been worse, too, because she let him take her elbow and she leaned heavily on his arm.

"Stay with it," he said quietly. "Just a little longer. Then we'll rest."

"Walk till sun-up," she said.

There was a faint gasping in her voice, as though speaking were an effort.

"About half an hour," Greg said. "A little longer."

"Maybe you'd better go ahead," she said. "Get the signal fire alight, then come back. . . ."

"We'll go together," Greg said evenly. "An hour or two won't matter."

Hours did matter, but he could never leave her there alone to endure the malignancy of the sun, to face the thirst-crazed natives homing on the soak.

Lucy was near the end of her walking. He could tell that from the way she was leaning on his arm. The battering of the storm, the clogging dust and the pain of her injured foot

Continued on page 32

Sir Pierson leaves for New York with his wife and daughter. His austere courtesy fascinates America's voluble politicians

Coolest man in the cold war

by PETER MICHELMORE

When tempers fray at the United Nations, Sir Pierson Dixon stays aloof. His poker-faced calm is Britain's best weapon

INSIDE the glass palace of the United Nations, close to New York City's dismal East River, a delegate from the Soviet Union held the floor. Around him delegates from other nations listened through their headphones to simultaneous translations of his speech.

Glancing around the chamber to see the effect of his words on the others, the Soviet delegate noticed that a lean, auburn-haired man in one of the seats allotted to Great Britain was not using his headphones to receive the English translation.

Riled, the Russian commented, "It seems that Britain is not taking much note of what we have to say."

Britain's permanent representative at the United Nations, Sir Pierson Dixon, had no wish to appear rude; he could have replied honestly: "I understand Russian perfectly," but that would have amounted to unseemly boasting, inconsistent with the training and tradition of a British career diplomat. He made no effort to show that he had understood the remark. It was left to his friends to score over the Soviet delegate by pointing out that Dixon had no need for headphones.

Among the diplomats and politicians who form the elite group of senior permanent representatives in New York, fifty-one year old Sir Pierson Dixon has high status as a leader in the exhausting business and social round of the United Nations. He retains the rank of ambassador, and occupies Britain's permanent seat in the Security Council. His reserve and his shy, studious appearance mark him as one of the Foreign Office professionals who do much of the thinking for British spokesmen at international conferences.

Britain's quiet, experienced backroom boys fascinate America's voluble politicians. The *New York Times* once said: "On the Continent these Foreign Office men are credited with mastery of Machiavellian intrigue and diplomatic finesse. Each could produce quickly and efficiently a memorandum on agriculture in the Sudan or fishing rights in the West Pacific. They could, at a moment's notice, journey to Nigeria or Czechoslovakia and appear at a conference correctly attired and completely briefed to present the British case."

Upholding this austere tradition in many parts of the world during twenty-five years has left Dixon with complete control of his emotions and an unwillingness ever to appear to show off, even when not on duty. One of the few friends he has made during the two years he has spent in New York is Selim Sarper, Turkey's permanent representative at the United Nations. They go shooting together in the marshes of Connecticut.

One day Sarper stood in a blind with his shot gun while Dixon occupied another blind nearby. The Turk saw a duck, but as it was flying high and wide he let it go. Then, to his surprise, he saw Dixon aim briefly and fire, although the duck seemed far out of range. It was an action that would have deserved a reprimand for wild shooting had the duck not fallen from the sky, dead.

Afterwards Sarper tried to get Dixon to tell him why such a snap shot was so successful. "Was it the fine British-made gun, or yourself?" Dixon just smiled shyly, and sighed.

Dixon's calm manner brings him many successes in United Nations debates, where he is at his best when the tempers of others are wearing thin. In the recent dispute over the election of a new member to replace Turkey on the Security Council, the United States and Australia together urged the appointment of the Phillipines. Dixon reminded the delegates of a "gentlemen's agreement" of 1946 that the seat should go to East Europe. He suggested Yugoslavia, which the Russians immediately nominated. Through an angry debate Dixon remained quietly insistent. He avoided a breach between Britain and the United States, and the result was a compromise: the Phillipines one year, Yugoslavia the next.

WHEN he does become furious, his anger is betrayed only by the whiteness of his face. At a Security Council meeting in February, when the admission of the Sudan into the United Nations was discussed, the Soviet delegate, Sobolev, spoke of the Sudan's heritage of "colonial despotism" and said that her achievement of independence was "a victory for all colonial people."

Pale-faced, Dixon jumped up and said: "Britain has a great record of bringing countries into nationhood, whereas the reverse is true of the Soviet Union. While we have brought hundreds of millions to nationhood, the Soviet Union has brought tens of millions to servitude."

He bore no personal illwill, however, to the Soviet delegate. Shortly afterwards, he and Lady Ismene Dixon entertained Mr. and Mrs. Arkady Sobolev at Wave Hill, their three-storey, eighteen-room Georgian-style house overlooking the Hudson River on the fringe of New York's tough Bronx neighbourhood.

The house, built in 1820, needs a staff of six, has thirteen telephones for inter-room communication, and is one of very few homes in New York not centrally heated. Besides Sir Pierson and Lady Dixon, their thirteen year-old daughter Corinna is the only other member of the family living there. The Queen Mother stayed at Wave Hill during her visit to New York in 1954, and previous tenants include Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, Thackeray and Toscanini. The house is an hour's drive from Dixon's office on Park Avenue, and he would like to live somewhere more convenient.

Dixon usually rises at seven, leaves for his office in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce at nine, and returns at nine in the evening. Sometimes, seeking relief from formality, he travels home in a crowded slow train from Grand Central Station, or skates with other Bronx residents on a public pond. He is never troubled by autograph hunters. "There is no city in the world," he says, "where you can achieve anonymity as completely as you can in New York."

Every morning in his office he has mail and Foreign Office cables to read, speeches to write, appointments and staff assignments to arrange. He prepares for the day's United Nations meeting; whether it concerns economics, trusteeship, colonialism or disarmament, he must be fully briefed to present Britain's views. When the United Nations General Assembly meets in the three months of autumn and early winter, he frequently has time only for a sandwich lunch between committee meetings.

Sir Pierson's work constantly invades his leisure time. He and Lady Dixon entertain forty or fifty times a year at Wave Hill. In the social world, too, Dixon's tact is often apparent.

Close friends recall a cloudy day last spring when forty people gathered in the book-lined drawing-room at Wave Hill for cocktails and small talk. With regard for the weather, the men present wore black dinner jackets. Then two of the younger United Nations delegates arrived in white dinner jackets.

The two young men were obviously ill at ease, and Dixon, their host, puckered his brow. Then

Whispered conversation with Vyshinsky, Russia's representative at the U.N. until his death. Sir Pierson speaks ten languages

he walked across to his twenty-five year old son, Piers, and whispered in his ear.

Piers left the gathering. A few minutes later he walked down the stairs and rejoined the party. He had changed into a white dinner jacket.

On another occasion, when he was entertaining a group of celebrities, Dixon noticed that a clergyman from a Middle Eastern country seemed withdrawn from the others. The man spoke no English or French. Dixon, determined to talk to him without resorting to sign language, went through his entire repertory of foreign languages. He tried English, Russian, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Turkish, and modern and ancient Greek.

In the end he tried Latin. The cleric beamed, and the two men conversed in Latin for more than an hour.

"Sir Pierson has the reputation in New York of being a very wise and cultured man," says one of his friends. "He probably has his weaknesses, too, just like anybody else. But he is one hundred per cent successful in hiding them."

Dixon is the son of a Bedfordshire landowner. He went to Bedford School and Cambridge. Recently, at a dinner of old students of Cornell College, Iowa, many of the middle-aged Americans round the table called him "Red." They were using the name they gave him when they first met him, in 1927, a Cambridge graduate with a mop of unruly red hair on a visit to the United States.

On the ship two of the Cornell men invited the young Englishman to join them on a ranch in Wyoming, where they were to work through the summer. Dixon spent two months sleeping in the open, chopping wood, building fires and teaching eastern holidaymakers how to ride. "The best time I ever had," he says.

Afterwards he studied at the British School of Archaeology in Athens. In Greece, he married Ismene Atchley, daughter of a British naturalist and his Greek wife.

He taught classical subjects at Cambridge for a year, then joined the Foreign Office as a third secretary. He was twenty-four, and his colleagues called him "the infant prodigy." On his twenty-eighth birthday he was sent to the British Embassy in Madrid as third secretary. Later he was transferred to Ankara. By 1938 he was acting first secretary in Rome.

EARLY in 1940 Dixon became Balkans specialist and adviser to Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, and in 1943 he was appointed an adviser to Harold Macmillan, British minister resident at Allied Forces Mediterranean Headquarters, in Algiers. A few months later he was appointed Eden's principal private secretary, and he stayed at his desk when Ernest Bevin became Foreign Secretary in 1945. Dixon attended the historic conferences at Yalta, Cairo, Casablanca, Quebec, Moscow, and Potsdam.

The aircraft in which Dixon flew with Eden to Casablanca ran into an electrical storm and by the time the pilot could trust his instruments the aircraft was heading for New York. They got back on course, but the fuel was low. The pilot woke Dixon. "I think we shall have to land, sir," he said. "We're nearly out of fuel."

Dixon woke Eden and passed on the message. "Where are we now?" Eden asked. The pilot told him that they were over Spain.

"We can't land here," snapped Eden. "We'll be interned for the rest of the war. Try to make Gibraltar." The aircraft landed in Gibraltar with the fuel tanks almost dry.

In 1948, Dixon was appointed British Ambassador to Prague in time to unpack and witness the Communist coup that put Czechoslavakia behind the Iron Curtain. He was knighted in 1950 and recalled to the Foreign Office in that year to become Deputy Under-Secretary of State for political and later for economic affairs. He replaced Sir Gladwyn Jebb at the United Nations in 1954.

An expert on wild life, Dixon often writes articles for nature magazines. He has hunted capercaillies in Austria and chamois in Corinthia. Often he rises at dawn to watch wild pheasants on the bank of the Hudson.

Dixon is optimistic about the United Nations. "Its prestige has been given a considerable lift by the admission of sixteen new nations," he says. "Now it is a real world organization." He is optimistic, too, about the chances of continued world peace at the present level.

"My guess," he said recently, "is that in the immediate future there is more chance for diplomacy and less risk of aggression. The diplomacy, however, must continue to be backed by strength, by securities such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization."

Meanwhile, diplomacy rules all Dixon's actions at the United Nations. When Sobolev, the Russian, recently virtually refused to agree to the admission of Japan to the United Nations if Outer Mongolia were left out, Security Council members saw Dixon's face go white. But when he stood, half-turned towards Sobolev, his words were quiet and even. "This attitude is the height of cynicism," he said, "besides doing a grave injustice to the Japanese nation. It is to play the game of power politics in a most blatant fashion."

"Doesn't he ever let off steam?" asked an American reporter.

"I bet he plays a good hand at poker," said another.

Dixon left the debating chamber and hunted through the libraries for a background book on Outer Mongolia. THE END

THE GRAPES OF PARADISE

by H. E. BATES

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

Rockley was frightened by Thérèse—her sullen rages and sudden passions! He tried to keep away from her. But she was wildly, dangerously jealous

She kissed him passionately, powerfully. It was an affair of overwhelming splendour . . .

I MET Harry Rockley in a barber's shop in Tahiti. He had a foot-long scar, like a brown bootlace, down one arm. "Take good care nobody does that to you," he said, and told me his story. . . .

He had been staying on a nearby island. Thérèse, the girl who helped to run the rest-house there, had a magnificently powerful body. But she was ugly—so ugly she seemed almost beautiful, he said.

One afternoon Harry had gone boating with her young brother; they had returned, late, to find Thérèse sullen with anger. Harry had not been able to understand it—not then. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

Encounter At Midnight

NEXT morning, Rockley told me, it was impossible to recognize, or even believe in the existence of, the girl of the evening before. If the flowers of the hibiscus trees had been purple that morning instead of yellow, the change could not, he said, have surprised him more.

She was smiling broadly as she brought him his breakfast of *pamplemousse*, coffee, fresh-baked Chinese bread and butter, boiled eggs and a basket of oranges, papayas, limes and avocado pears. She actually prepared the *pamplemousse* in front of him. Then she poured his coffee.

While he was eating the *pamplemousse* she cut a large papaya in half and began to prepare it, too, knowing he liked to finish his meal with that. In the bright orange cradles of flesh the black-grey papaya seeds glistened like fat beads of caviare.

All day she remained smiling, attentive, rather talkative, and extremely sweet to him. There was no mention either of the incident at the net or of the boy. In the late morning she rolled up the skirt of her *pereue* above her knees, stood in a shallow part of the lagoon and washed her hair. Fresh-fallen hibiscus flowers floated on the water, and under and about the landing-stage small fish of brilliant blue, with stripes of bright ochre, swam tamely in and out of the sunshine.

One of the pleasantest things about life there, he said, was to watch the Polynesian girls wash their hair. Its great length, its strong blue blackness and the way it glistened as it dried in the sun were all beautiful things to see.

"I watched her half the morning," he said. "And she chattered as if she hadn't seen me for years."

Soon it occurred to him that she was spending more time than usual on her hair, combing it and recombing it, shaking it out and spreading it over her shoulders to dry. At last he spoke

He could not remember having seen this girl before. But he accepted her invitation to have a drink

about this, teasing her very slightly, and she said: "Tomorrow night there will be dancing. Had you forgotten?"

Occasionally on Saturday nights young men and girls came up from the village, sometimes bringing a drum, a banjo and a guitar. There would be a good deal of wine-drinking, singing of songs, dancing, noisy frivolity and provocative laughter. A lot of flirting went on and the girls would swing taut rubbery hips, their tight skin golden in the lamplight, and curl their fingers in subtle invitation. Most of them wore lipstick, generally of much the same carmine shade as the big hibiscus flowers in their hair.

The following night she, too, wore lipstick. It was, he said, the first time he had ever seen her wear it and it made a difference to her face that was sharp, uneasy and startling. He said that it gave her a sort of defiance, a certain touch of savagery that made her look out of place among the smaller, prettier girls.

That evening he danced with her several times and once or twice the banjo played European or American tunes. He drank a fair amount of wine, thought the stars of the southern hemisphere had never looked so huge, soft and flower-like above the lagoon, and in general enjoyed himself greatly.

She, too, seemed very happy. The most remarkable thing about her, he said, the thing that never failed to surprise him each time he held her in his arms for the dances, was the lightness of her body. It was quite unbelievably perfect, he said, in its sheer balance and poise.

About midnight he walked outside to light a cigarette, relax a bit and get a breath of air. An exquisite little wind, heavy with warmth and tree perfume, blew for a moment or two across the lagoon, died suddenly and then sprang up again, stirring the fronds of the palms. He stood for a time under a palm tree and watched the stars.

HE had drunk, he thought, quite enough wine, though not too much to prevent his remembering, after a few minutes, that he had been told not to stand, sit or lie under palms. Coconuts falling from a great height are projectiles of considerable nuisance and he laughed to himself as he remembered it and moved away.

Then the wind sprang up again across the lagoon, giving quite a gusty shudder in the fronds of palm, almost as if a storm were blowing up. He heard it stir the water, creating a sudden short rush of waves that lapped against the outrigger and rattled the boat chain.

A moment later he saw her come out of the house and down to the landing-stage. The fact that she went straight to the boats made him think that possibly she too had heard the stir of wind and had come down, as she sometimes did at night, to see that the canoes were safely moored.

She stood for some minutes on the landing-stage. In the rest-house the banjo and the drum were thumping with low regular rhythm, softly, and a long bar of light came from the open walls and across to the landing-stage.

She stood just beyond the edge of this light, hands on her hips, looking at the water, and for some time he stood some distance away, uncertain whether to speak or not, watching her.

"Then I made another mistake," he said. "Another damn *faux pas*!"

It was four or five days after our first meeting that he got as far as telling me this, and up to that time I hadn't attributed to him any great sense of humour at all. But now across his face there went, I thought, the flicker of a grin. A moment later I realized it wasn't a grin. It was a deadly serious stab of pain.

He walked over to where she was standing on the landing-stage. As she heard him coming she turned, moved a step or two and lifted her head. The light from the rest-house was shining behind her now and suddenly he saw her all black except for pure edges of light glimmering along the massive curves of her shoulders, her thick upper arms and the fringes of her hair.

She looked exceptionally dark, powerful and

magnificent. The individual features of her face were lost in shadow. All he could see was a great carved head, sharply poised, well up, with its flowing mass of hair. Then she moved again, her eyes glinted quickly in the house lights and he saw her shake back, with a splendid roll of her neck, one side of her hair, showing suddenly the bright yellow saucers of flower above her ear.

A moment later he was kissing her. Or rather, after the first impact of his lips, she was kissing him.

As with everything else she did it was powerful and massive. It was an affair of overwhelming physical splendour. She gripped him with great strength, locking him against her, passionately and in a queer melancholy fashion repeating his name.

He realized, next morning, what a stupid mistake he had made. He only hoped she would forget it as soon as he wanted to do.

"The confounded trouble was," he said, "that I couldn't forget it. I'd really got quite fond of her—not in love or anything like that, but just fond. She was very, very likeable."

And not only, as he explained, the girl. All of them were very likeable. The mother was eternally pleasant, smiling and soft-eyed. The boy was quick, good-looking, light in frame and surprisingly energetic. He was always fishing, making or mending the long elliptical baskets of bamboo for keeping fish alive and fresh under water, doing jobs on the boat or the outrigger. Occasionally Rockley helped him with these things.

After the incident of kissing the girl he began to welcome more and more the chance of slipping away to swim or fish with the boy. He welcomed a chance of mere companionship. That was one of the ways in which he hoped the girl would see that the affair of the kiss was merely an episode he didn't want repeated. He was desperately anxious not to become involved in anything deeper.

"It had just the opposite effect," he said.

Whatever he did with the boy aroused her to terrible silences: moods that lasted, sometimes, the greater part of a day. Two or three times the boy and himself took the outrigger as far as the seaward end of the lagoon, but on the third of these trips she was so inexplicably sullen, black and mute against him, that he was determined never to make one again.

ANOTHER day he and the boy walked up the mountainside, a distance of four or five miles, to where, on the edge of the thicket, eight or ten men were felling a tree for a dug-out canoe. He had very much wanted to see how these canoes were made and he spent a very pleasant day.

Finally he decided he would like a couple of pictures of himself with the men. He had never let the boy use the camera before but the viewfinder was so simple that it took less than a minute to show him how it was used. The boy was not merely delighted about this; he was innocently, worshipfully overjoyed. He fairly danced with the camera, Rockley said, so much so that finally Rockley had to leave the group and demonstrate how the boy must press the camera against his chest in order to prevent it shaking. He found then that the boy's hands were actually quivering, almost shuddering, with excitement.

There was a great deal of jollying laughter about this, and the boy responded by behaving in a charming way, as if he were a person of singular privilege, almost a hero.

"It did your heart good to see him," Rockley said.

Later in the afternoon, as he and the boy came down the mountainside, a single cloud on the upper crest of the mountain enlarged itself, descended suddenly and broke in a storm. They ran for shelter in a shack owned by a toothless Chinaman who share-cropped vanilla farther up the hill. The rain, warm, steamy and torrential, beat into the great leaves of surrounding forest like a sluice, while thunder walked up and down the dark, precipitate valleys between strange fires of sun and lightning.

In the middle of all this the Chinaman hobbled out, bandylegged, into lakes of rain, coming back some minutes later with half a dozen oranges and a spray of vanilla orchid and two vanilla beans.

Rockley sat under the wide eaves of the shack and sucked oranges and watched the Chinaman explain, with neither French nor English but only little gestures of a pair of yellow, dirty hands and a match stick, how the cream lips of the little delicate, self-sterile ghost-orchid had to be fertilized.

PRESENTLY the rain stopped as suddenly as it had begun and there was more laughter, very high-pitched and tinny, from the little Chinaman, as Rockley allowed the boy to take another picture of himself and the Chinaman standing by the door of the shack. All about them the forest sparkled and dripped with water. On Rockley's hands was a strange combined fragrance of oranges and vanilla, at once fresh and exotic, and he felt it had been an enchanted, exhilarating day.

"But that was only half what the boy felt," he said. "He was still so excited when we left the Chinaman that I hadn't the heart to take the camera away from him. I let him keep it slung round his neck and he went down the mountainside like a king."

Then, as the two of them reached the rest-house, the boy started to run forward. He was twenty yards or so from the house when Thérèse came out of it. As soon as she saw him she stopped. He was still very excited, waving his hands about, making demonstrations with the camera and calling her name.

Then, four or five yards away from her, the boy stopped, too. He flicked open the viewfinder of the camera and started to look into it, laughing, as if about to take her picture.

"The next thing I knew," Rockley said, "was that she had snatched the camera from his neck and was swinging it wildly round her head, like a prehistoric sling or something, as if she was going to bash his brains out."

The boy ducked in terror, put his hands up to his head to protect himself and then ran to the house. She took a dozen or fifteen furious barefooted strides after him, screeching madly and still swinging the camera about her head.

It wasn't until the boy disappeared into the house that she seemed to come to her senses. Then her arms suddenly dropped. She stared in a stupefied sort of way at the camera, as if not sure now whether it was a camera or a sling-bag or something else, and then came slowly back to Rockley.

"She just stood there, gave me the camera and stared," Rockley said. "No recognition in the stare. No contrition. No apology. Nothing like that. Just a long, empty, sightless stare."

This episode perturbed him so much that he could not sleep that night. After some hours he got up, put on a pair of straw slippers and walked down to the landing stage. He started to smoke a cigarette and think things over.

In the pure dark sky the stars seemed more brilliant, more beautiful and more voluminous than ever. He stared at them and their reflection across the lagoon for a long time and then, in spite of them and the pleasure everything about the place had given him, he came to a decision.

"I decided," he said, "to get out. The schooner would be arriving in a couple of days. I could catch it and go back to Papeete."

There wasn't, he said, much reasoning about the decision. He still had several weeks of his leave to go. He hated Papeete. The trouble was that he had begun to be much more disturbed. He did not know why, but for some reason he had a queer, fatalistic uneasy feeling of some impending disaster.

The beam of the torch half-blinded

He had already started to walk back to the house when he saw her coming down the stone steps to the landing stage. She suddenly halted half-way up them.

This time there was no light from the house behind her. She was simply a shape of vague patterns, her *pareus* hastily wrapped round her, under the brilliant stars.

He was determined that, this time, there should be no nonsense: no more kissing. He was perfectly sober this time, with no fancy illusions about anything, and he walked straight past her, not stopping or turning until he

him. As his eyes cleared, he saw her standing over him, the spear poised to strike

reached the top of the steps. Then he spoke to her. "Thérèse," he said.

She neither turned nor spoke to him.

"Thérèse," he said, "I'm going away. By the next schooner."

There was no sort of movement from her. She was simply a shape carved out of the darkness.

"Good night," he said. He had already turned on his heel and was walking away. "I'll be going the day after tomorrow."

"The schooner doesn't come until the day after that," she said.

"All right. Good enough," he said. "The day after that."

He walked on. She didn't speak again. He went into the house with a feeling of relief mingled with sudden, wretched twinges of regret. There was absolutely no reasoning in his going; he did not want to go. But he was convinced, absolutely certain now, that it was the thing he must do.

But before the schooner arrived, three days later, something else happened. He made, he said, the third of his stupid mistakes about her.

He was determined to leave in the friendliest possible fashion. He even started to plan little gifts for everybody, and for the first of the three days he behaved with polite neutrality. He began by avoiding the boy. He deliberately swam, fished, walked and idled about the place alone. Whenever the boy approached him he made an excuse about a book, a towel, a letter or something and went away.

The immediate result was, as he said, that she couldn't have been sweeter. She was her old friendly, laughing, almost frivolous self again. She prepared his fruit at table, made jokes as she watched him eat and threw back her head in gusts of superb, sumptuous laughter.

It was only when the boy came into sight that her attitude and her expression changed. Then she seemed to go blank before him. A sort of blight came over her. Every vestige of light and friendliness was suddenly extinguished. He began to understand then what was the matter with her. For the first time, fully, he realized how jealous she was.

"That was the Polynesian virtue the guidebooks had left out," he said. "So jealous she couldn't bear to share me with the kid, her own brother. So possessive that she was frantic about a boy, another male."

The second day, having put his finger on the cause of everything, he decided to keep himself more to himself than ever. As a result, after breakfast he walked the entire distance to the point at the end of the lagoon.

A white, sandy track wound pleasantly under high palms past occasional abandoned gardens of half-wild gardenias, *croton* and *tiare* trees. A few wooden shacks, some empty, some with a few cockerels crowing about them, were dotted about the thickets. From far off came the inexhaustible thunder of the reef and then, at the very tip of the land, in from the open ocean, the great blown cloud of spume, white and glittering and sometimes rainbow-shot, in the brilliant air.

He was half-way back from the point when a voice hailed him unexpectedly from one of the houses in the thickets on the shoreward side of the track. He turned, stopped and saw a girl waving her hand.

"Hallo there," she said in English. "Good morning." She was walking across the garden towards the thin cane fence that flanked the track. "I thought it was you."

He said good morning, stared blankly and did not know what to do.

"You're staying at the rest-house, aren't you?" she said. "Don't you remember me?"

He said he was sorry: he didn't remember.

"I saw you quite a few times at the New Pacific Hotel," she said. "Dancing. Over at Papeete."

"Oh! Yes," he said.

"I really come from here," she said. "I go over for a few weeks sometimes."

She smiled: uncommonly small, pale and compact, with a delicate upward cast in her eyes that he afterwards knew came from the mingling of Polynesian blood and Chinese. She moved with grace, her voice soft and rather high. To look at her after looking at Thérèse was, he said, like looking at a little yellow parakeet after a buzzard, or at one of the little angel-finned blue-and-ochre fish after the giant sloppy ray that had scared him in the lagoon.

"Like it here?" she said. "I saw you go past once before, but you were with Timi that time and I didn't like to call."

"I like it very much."

"How long do you think you'll stay?"

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I'm off tomorrow. Catching the schooner."

"If you like it so much, why are you off tomorrow?"

It was altogether too complicated to explain and he said he didn't know.

"You look hot," she said. "Wouldn't you like to sit down on the veranda a minute and I'll get you something to drink? Some lime or orange—whichever you prefer."

A few moments later he was sitting down on the veranda of the little house. Going in and

Continued on page 36

Pensioners are the most conscientious tenants, say rent collectors. Rather than miss paying, some of them will go desperately short of food

On her rounds Clare Nicholas plays with children, shops for the bedridden and comforts the bereaved. Once, she had to tell a Teddy Boy gang-leader not to hold noisy parties

Mrs. Nicholas calls again

by JOHN HARMAN

She is the umpire on the doorstep. She ends tiffs, collects rents—and counts nearly six hundred tenants as her friends

WHEN Clare Nicholas, a slim blonde, was collecting rents in Lambeth, London, two years ago, she suddenly had an uneasy feeling that she was being watched. Three men were staring at her from a car on the opposite side of the road.

Her satchel contained £250—the results of a morning's work. A colleague in similar circumstances had been robbed, tied and thrown into an air raid shelter, so she was frightened when the car began to follow her down the street.

She decided that she must get the money to safety. By chance, her next call was on the caretaker of some flats. She entered his office, and, brushing aside his protests, filled his pockets with the £250. Then, after persuading him to leave by a back exit and go to a nearby bank, she returned to the street with an empty satchel and jumped on a passing bus.

Although the car tried to pursue her, it was lost in traffic when the lights turned red at a crossroads. "I was trailed for the next three days," she says, "but Scotland Yard sent a detective to shadow me. The men were arrested."

Mrs. Nicholas, who was congratulated by her employers, the London County Council, for foiling a carefully planned raid, has found that collecting rents demands considerably more than a talent for walking. Aged forty-three, with a ready smile and a shrewd, direct manner which has encouraged many tenants to pay their dues promptly, Clare Nicholas is an Assistant Estate Officer. She calls on 586 flats in twenty-eight blocks every week, and is responsible not only for collecting rents and gas and electricity payments, but also for numerous aspects of the tenants' welfare.

This has meant helping to organize socials, taking children on theatre treats, shopping for bedridden people, trying to mend tiffs between neighbours, comforting the bereaved, keeping an eye on the council's property—one enterprising woman used L.C.C. washing machines for starting a laundry business—and, on occasion, pointing out breaches of rules.

When tenants in a block of flats complained that a man was holding noisy parties after the permitted limit of 11 p.m., she had the task of reproving him and did not relish it. He was said to be the leader of a notorious gang of Teddy Boys. Her pluck wavered when he loomed out of his doorway, his face disfigured with scars, but she gave him an outspoken reminder of his obligations to the community around him.

"Much to my surprise, he took it like a lamb," she says. "From then on, he kept to the rule—and always raised his hat to me."

In eight years, Mrs. Nicholas has worked in three of the toughest areas of London—the Elephant and Castle, Lambeth and her present one, Vauxhall. "Apart from physical strength and courage, a rent collector needs optimism and persistence," says Charles Greenfield, her area officer.

Tenants who have hoped to escape notice by simply not answering the door have rarely got away with it. Mrs. Nicholas once knocked at a flat at half-hour intervals from early morning to late in the evening until the occupants, mainly to obtain peace, admitted to being at home.

Mrs. Nicholas has discovered that housewives are apt to be evasive about rent at fixed seasons of the year—during sales. When faced with a blank refusal to pay, she presses for her money until she gets it. "Some homes with youngsters at work have thirty pounds or more coming in every week," she says. "I argue that the rent, which is often between twenty-three and forty-five shillings for a five-room flat, can surely be afforded."

Like other collectors, she has authority to seek court action against really obstinate defaulters, but so far she has not had to use it. The L.C.C., which is the world's biggest landlord and owns a total of 170,000 homes, estimates that the amount of rent which has to be written off each year is only twopence halfpenny per £100.

ALTHOUGH the council employs seventy-one women rent collectors, compared with 318 men, it believes that in some respects women are more suited to the job. According to one official: "Collectors usually have to meet the housewives, who might sometimes fool a man with hard-luck stories, but would hesitate to try to get the better of another woman's intuition."

Collectors soon develop a sense of knowing if a tenant is telling the truth, and they do not insist on payment in cases of genuine hardship. After calling on a young mother who broke down and said that her husband had gone to prison and left her penniless, Mrs. Nicholas told her seven colleagues in her office, and they helped

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

to provide warm clothes for the children. The Women's Voluntary Services replaced furniture which the mother had chopped up for fuel, and financial grants were obtained.

The chief difficulty of rent collectors is winning the confidence of tenants and getting them to discuss such personal problems. "At first, my tenants hated my face," Mrs. Nicholas admits. "Their attitude softened when they realized that my job was to help them. Now they ask my advice on all kinds of subjects, from holidays to family planning."

Renewing hundreds of contacts weekly, however, means becoming involved in local feuds and arguments. Her diplomacy has been tested in strained situations caused by TV interference from vacuum cleaners, children who disturb their elders—"the most common trouble in flats"—and marriages to "foreigners." A cockney girl was ostracized for marrying a Yorkshireman.

Tenants frequently approach Mrs. Nicholas with accommodation problems. Exchanges of homes between existing occupiers have got official approval in a matter of days, but the placing of new tenants has taken longer.

Not everyone has been content with explanations for delays. A woman who suffered from the housing shortage called at Mrs. Nicholas's office and asked for a flat. On being told that none was available, she said: "Take *this*, then!" —and walked out, leaving her baby on the counter. The baby had to be taken to a police station.

"Some collectors like to be extremely friendly in their dealings with tenants. Others prefer to be austere," says Greenfield. "Mrs. Nicholas's technique is to jolly them along, whatever happens." She was unperturbed, and collected the rent as usual, when she arrived at a flat in the middle of a police raid; the occupant was throwing thousands of pounds of jewellery out of a window.

Other unusual sights met by estate officers on their rounds include a husband and wife pelting each other with milk bottles, coal stacked in a bedroom cupboard, a vixen caged in a back garden and a bath converted into an aquarium for carp.

One estate officer was taken aback when a housewife proudly showed him her bath. It was in perfect condition; in fact, it had not been used for years. The taps were shrouded in cobwebs.

RENT collectors agree that the most troublesome tenants are among the under-forties. The most conscientious are old-age pensioners, some of whom, rather than miss a payment, have gone desperately short of food.

A woman who had come out of hospital with a £10 debt hanging over her head tried to live on a packet of cigarettes for three days before confessing that when her rent and other commitments had been paid, she was left with only twenty-six shillings a week. "As usual with elderly people, she was far too proud to ask for help," says Mrs. Nicholas. "It took hours to persuade her to apply for assistance."

Pensioners living by themselves are a major worry for the L.C.C., and rent collectors supply each one with a large black "H" printed on cardboard. Placed in a window, it is recognized by the police, civil defence, firemen and others as a signal for help in an emergency.

Sometimes, though, it has not been possible for pensioners to let the outside world know of their plight. Three times in the past twelve months, one collector has come across what Mrs. Nicholas dreads—a deep silence after a knock. Police have discovered fatal accidents.

In nine years, Mrs. Nicholas, who has a young son and lives in Cheam, Surrey, has reached the top of the L.C.C. salary scale for her job, which ranges from £7 10s. to £13 15s. a week. Originally she was a welfare officer in a large manufacturing firm, and then became a sick visitor for National Insurance. Her present post appealed to her because of the outdoor life. Rent collectors have one of the lowest rates of illness among L.C.C. employees.

Every year she wears out four pairs of shoes and two coats, which have holes rubbed in them by her satchel.

Other occupational hazards are split fingernails caused by handling money, missiles dropped from high balconies by playful children —a colleague narrowly missed a direct hit from a leg of lamb—and constant invitations to stop for a chat and a cup of tea.

She has also learned to beware of children who answer her knock and announce that no one else is at home.

When a small boy told her this, she asked for details of his mother's return. The child looked puzzled. Then he ran down the hall, shouting: "Mummy, she wants to know when you're coming back." THE END

A child pays for mother. Clare Nicholas makes friends with her tenants, but she has authority to take defaulters to court

Right: If a tenant has a problem—from a frozen pipe to television interference —Clare Nicholas will try to solve it

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Out of the storm

Continued from page 23

had all combined to rob her strength. He could feel his own strength ebbing too. He knew they would be lucky to make the soak even if the natives abstained from their revenge.

He knew that with a dull, persistent certainty, and, knowing it, his earlier self-accusation became a vast, obsessive agony of mind. He was almost glad of the contempt Lucy had shown for him at the beginning of their trek, that he could still sense in her. And now his hatred for the natives, his professed brutality, seemed pointless; dwarfed by his struggle for survival.

He slid a glance at Lucy from the corners of his eyes. He could just make out her profile in the pre-dawn glimmer. Her eyes were shut and her cheekbones seemed enormous. There was no life in her face. No expression. She was an automaton, moving by some psychic clockwork.

Then she fell with a shapeless rush. He went down quickly after her. "Lucy!" His voice was hoarse with fear, cracked with dryness. He whipped out his canteen and trickled water through her lips. "Lucy. . . !"

She opened her eyes. "Now you'll have to go on alone," she whispered. "It's our only chance. I can't walk any more."

"Sure!" He tried to smile, but it wouldn't come. He badly wanted a drink, but they had only two half-filled canteens between them now. "Sure!" he said again. "Just take it easy."

Then he hoisted her in a shoulder lift, ignoring her protests, staggering under her slight weight.

He blundered forward, conscious of the growing helplessness of flight, but unable to give up trying. While you tried there was a chance.

And then the sun clawed up over the far jungle, angry hot even at the beginning of the day. He began to sweat and his breath was jagged. His throat burned as though it were on fire, and at the end of half an hour he had to stop.

He knelt and lowered Lucy to the ground, then sprawled beside her and could feel the sun instantly beating against the sweat patches on his back where she had lain. So he got up and crawled around until his sitting shadow protected her face. Then he saw the natives.

Fear shucked his weariness away. His right hand moved instinctively for a gun, searched the air in lost bewilderment, and flopped helpless at his side. The natives had stopped just out of throwing range, clustered together, leaning on their spears. Gaunt, wasted men. Their rib bones standing out, their bearded faces hollow.

Greg narrowed his bleary eyes to see them better, craning forward with a tenseness that induced a quivering along the stretched muscles of his back.

The electric field of his alarm must have touched Lucy. Or perhaps some muttered imprecation. . . . She struggled up on to her elbows.

"The poor things look half dead," she said in a thin, dry whisper.

Greg noted their starved boniness, bones without flesh and the skin in folds where the fat had wasted away. "They've had it tough," he said, "poor devils."

He heard himself say the words, meaning them, yet unable to accept at first that they had come out of his mouth. Something in his exhaustion must have been responsible, he thought.

Time seemed endless and unhurried. His mind floated on it. Then he was mildly surprised to realize he had no hatred for these black men. It was funny. He had hated them to the point of killing when he had had the upper hand. Now he was at their mercy he had no feeling about them except pity. Pity for his own executioners, if that is what they were to be. He turned to Lucy.

"I'm sorry for this," he said emotionally. "For everything. . . ."

She laid a hand on his arm. "You did what you believed was right."

"All I could think about was cattle," he said bitterly. "I couldn't even think of you."

"You carried me," she said.

He covered her hand with one of his, pressing it tightly, his eyes on the still and silent black men. Something about their immobility, the apathy that surrounded them, touched a responsive chord in him. Then he realized they, too, were tired almost to the limit of endurance. He got a feeling, then, of shared hardships, of understanding.

It bewildered him, for the cattleman's creed didn't deal with personalities. Native cattle-spearers were criminals to be hunted down. They weren't men desperate for food; men with women and children crying out for a chance to live. . . . Men like these. They were merely symbols in the cattleman's fight against nature; a species of tick, a disease that could decrease the herds. . . .

Greg shook his head, for here in front of him were the hated ones, and

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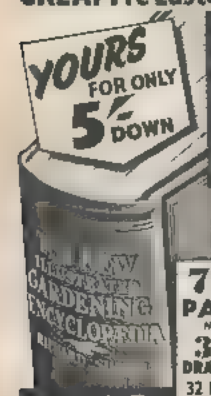

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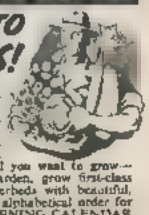

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" Full up, I'm afraid "

all he could feel for them was pity. All he could feel for himself was a rising shame that he had persecuted them.

Then a tall, bearded man moved forward and the others fanned out behind him.

He was almost as thin as the long hardwood spear that was balanced in his right hand. The white salt dust of the pan smudged his legs well past the knees. But everywhere else his body was deep charcoal black. Dull, not glistening. And he moved with the dignity of a king.

Greg watched him through slitted eyes. The angled sun sent dazzling shafts up from the ground, hurting his eyeballs, burning into the raw skin of his face.

He felt Lucy's hand move under his, felt her fingers digging into his arm. And there was nothing he could do to

KINDNESS—2

Kindness consists in loving people more than they deserve.

Joseph Joubert

comfort or protect her. He couldn't even parley with the natives. In all his years in the territory he hadn't tried to learn their language. No white man did. Not on the cattle stations anyway. A few missionaries did perhaps . . . prospectors . . . but not cattlemen.

" Oh, Greg!" Lucy whispered.

The words, and the fear behind them, struck into him cruelly. He writhed in mental anguish as he sat clasping her hand, watching the approaching black men and waiting for their swift striking spears.

The tall chief came gliding in, his bare feet sending up little puffs of the powdery dust. Greg watched them, fascinated by the fastidious way they touched the ground, the toes turned slightly inwards. . . . Then he lifted his head and met the black, liquid eyes.

He experienced a shock, for there was no hate in them; only sad curiosity and regret.

Once again his reason tottered, for these cattle killers were supposed to be wild, treacherous men according to his book. But he saw nobility in this chief's face, with its domed forehead, its marks of suffering. There was strength of purpose, too. The strength of a man who would always do those things that had to be done. The same sort of strength that had sent Greg chasing relentlessly after him across the saltpan.

The chief stopped three feet away and stood motionless, slowly scanning the two white folk, noting their battered helplessness. Then he spoke. His voice was clear and musical.

" You friend?"

Greg met the gaze of those dark eyes and he was glad that he could give the right answer truthfully. And the feeling was deeper than a mere surface thankfulness for the chance it offered of escape.

" Yes, friend!" he croaked. " All friend."

The chief's eyes gleamed. He exhaled deeply, with the relief of a man spared an unpleasant duty. White teeth flashed in his unruly beard. He drove his spear deep into the ground. Then he directed a stream of talk at the waiting bucks. They, too, began to smile, and when the chief had finished they threw down their spears and began lashing them together with lengths of grass rope, chatting with a gaiety incongruous with their emaciation.

Greg saw the work take shape and wonder added itself to the other confusions of his mind. He turned to Lucy. " They're making a stretcher."

He struggled to his feet, delayed excitement stirring in him, breaking through his weariness. Lucy was safe and somehow he felt reborn—not because he had been reprieved from death, but because a new, fuller life had opened up. " I can walk," he said.

The chief nodded gravely. He fumbled in a skin bag slung around his neck, and took out two strips of black, wizened stuff. He thrust one into Greg's hand, and, stooping, gave one to Lucy.

" Eat," he said. " Eat for strong."

Greg met his eyes and saw that he was laughing behind the gravity. Rich, deep amusement. Greg stretched his cracked lips in a grin and began chewing the food.

Lucy glanced up. " What is it?"

GREG laughed and he heard the chief chuckling quietly. " Smoked beef," he said. " I never knew it tasted so good."

" It's wonderful," she said.

Then her voice broke and tears swam in her eyes. Greg wanted to put his arms around her and kiss her. But he didn't because he remembered the natives didn't embrace their womenfolk in public. He refrained not because he feared to offend them; but because he didn't want to.

" We make feast," he told the chief. " Plenty meat."

The chief grinned. " Plenty food. Plenty friends."

Then Greg lifted Lucy and carried her to the rough spear-frame stretcher. And there was a great happiness on her stained and crumpled face. She wasn't smiling at him: she was just looking, and the way she was looking meant more to him than anything she could ever say.

THE END

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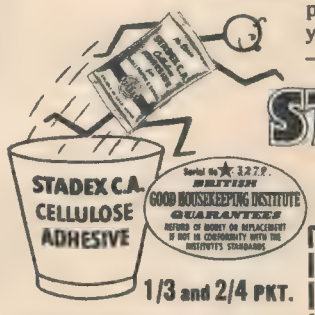

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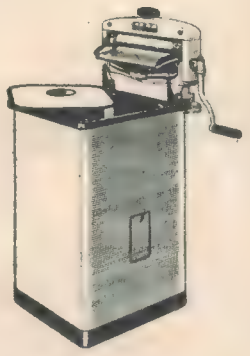

GAS—to be sure

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The grapes of paradise

Continued from page 29

out of the house, getting his drink of orange, she moved with pert grace, not wearing the ordinary *pareue*, but a simple waistless dress with several circles of emerald at the edge of the skirt.

"Pretty as hell," he said. "But then, no point in describing her. You've seen her already. That was her outside the barber's shop, that time you first met me."

He stayed for another hour. She lived with a mother, three elder sisters and an aunt, but that morning they were up at the plantations of vanilla, some way in the hills, fertilizing flowers. It was a job, she explained, for which men and the big Polynesian girls were far too clumsy, but which the delicate fingers of Chinese or part-Chinese did rapidly, skilfully and with perfection.

He could not help being fascinated by her own thin delicate hands as she sat there telling him these things.

"Don't you work in the plantations, too?" he asked her.

"Not often," she said. "I look after the house mostly, and do the cooking. I have a little trouble with my heart sometimes. Nothing much, but the hills are too far for me."

She put her left hand on her chest, just above her heart, and held it there. She was wearing in her hair not the big, customary hibiscus flower but a little cluster of *tiare*, not more than six or seven blossoms of small wax-white stars. Her breasts were sharp and upstanding, her arms were almost pure ivory, the nails shapely on the fragile little fingers, and he could smell the fragrance of *tiare* in the air.

The following day the schooner sailed without him.

Thérèse was delighted by his sudden change of plans. During the next few days, as she sat about the place at the various tasks of grating coconut, crushing herbs, preparing breadfruit, topping and tailing shrimps, washing and drying her hair, he knew that she was very happy.

He heard her singing a good deal. He would not have been surprised if her voice had emerged as a baritone, but it was in fact a rather thin soprano, high and pure. The songs she sang were repetitive, a little melancholy and mostly fairly slow and dreamy, like lullabies.

A few weeks before, he would have asked about these songs and perhaps have got her to tell him the meaning of the words; but now he was wary of doing anything, even in the most casual way, that she might interpret as affection.

For this reason he made a series of excuses for getting out of various things she wanted him to do. He had, for instance, asked several times about fresh-water shrimps and how she caught them at night, in the little streams, by the light of flares. For some time he had wanted to go on one of these shrimping expeditions, but now he made excuses of some sort whenever she mentioned it.

Soon she began to grow more and more persistent about this. In fact, as he said, she started pestering.

"Why don't you come with me? You say you want to come. All the time you say you want to come with me and now you don't come. Why won't you come?"

He would make some excuse about being too tired at night, or the wine making him sleepy; or he would change the subject completely.

"I'd rather go fishing for tuna," he would say. "Out in the open ocean. They fight so much better than shrimps do."

This, though it made her laugh, did nothing to stop her persistence.

"We can do both," she said. "To-night we can catch the shrimps. Then tomorrow we can take the boat and catch tuna."

He wanted, in fact, to do neither. What he chiefly wanted to do now, and he found it more attractive every day, was to walk along the lagoon to the

house among the thickets and play, as he put it, with the little parakeet there.

The little parakeet was, it seemed, amusing in many ways. Her heart, not quite strong enough to stand work in the vanilla plantations or the gradients up into the forests, exercised itself freely in other directions.

On hot, still afternoons he lay for hours on the beach with her. Parakeets, as he explained, are extremely affectionate creatures. And sometimes darkness was already falling when he walked back to the rest-house along the lagoon.

Then, when he got back, Thérèse would say: "You walk a long time, don't you? How far do you walk every day?"

"I like to look at the wreck," he would say, "and wonder how it got there. I like to watch for tuna. I thought I saw tuna leaping yesterday."

All this time he was afraid she would be suspicious. To his relief and surprise she was not: not, at any rate, at first. She seemed absolutely content, perfectly happy, simply to have him there. It was enough, it seemed, that he hadn't gone away.

Then, after about a week, she said: "Don't you get tired of watching the wreck? Soon I shall begin to think you go there to look at something else besides."

"Such as what?" he said. "It's beautiful. I like looking at the ocean. I saw a little plane yesterday."

"Such as the little Chinese girls in the house along there," she said. "They're very beautiful, too, the little Chinese girls.

For the moment it was on the tip of his tongue to say that the house was

KINDNESS—3

Kindness has converted more sinners than either zeal, eloquence, or learning.

F. W. Faber

always empty when he passed it, but he saved himself in time.

Even then there was no sign of her suspicion. There was not the faintest hint of jealousy. At the same time he felt disturbed. Women, as he remarked, are not compared with cats for nothing. They have infinite capacities for awaiting their time to strike. Gossip, moreover, is the fastest traveller in the world.

He decided, as a result, to go with her on the night-shrimping. That, he thought, would be the clever thing. That would appease her.

They set off the following evening at nine o'clock. The nights were always infinitely beautiful, full of a humid and fragrant softness, under enormous stars. But that night, under dense thickets of hibiscus and breadfruit that overhung the bed of the little stream, the boughs touching overhead in the narrow valley, most of the stars were hidden.

He had always thought of the sky, especially that brilliant southern sky, as a companionable place, and that night, under the thick forest leaves, he missed its brightness. As a result he got an increasing sense of uneasiness. There was something uncanny about it all.

Most of the time she walked in her bare feet on the stones of the stream. In her left hand she carried a torch, an ordinary electric battery one, and in her right a thin, two-pronged spear. Soon he was watching her shine the torch into little beds of shrimp eyes: the eyes, he thought, like imploring, guileless little beads, full of wide and dark surprise, as they looked up to their death-blow.

For about an hour he and the girl walked the narrow valley. During this time he carried the basket and sometimes he could hear the faintest rustle, a mere papery whisper, as the still-live shrimps stirred among each other in the darkness.

Finally, they came out into a break

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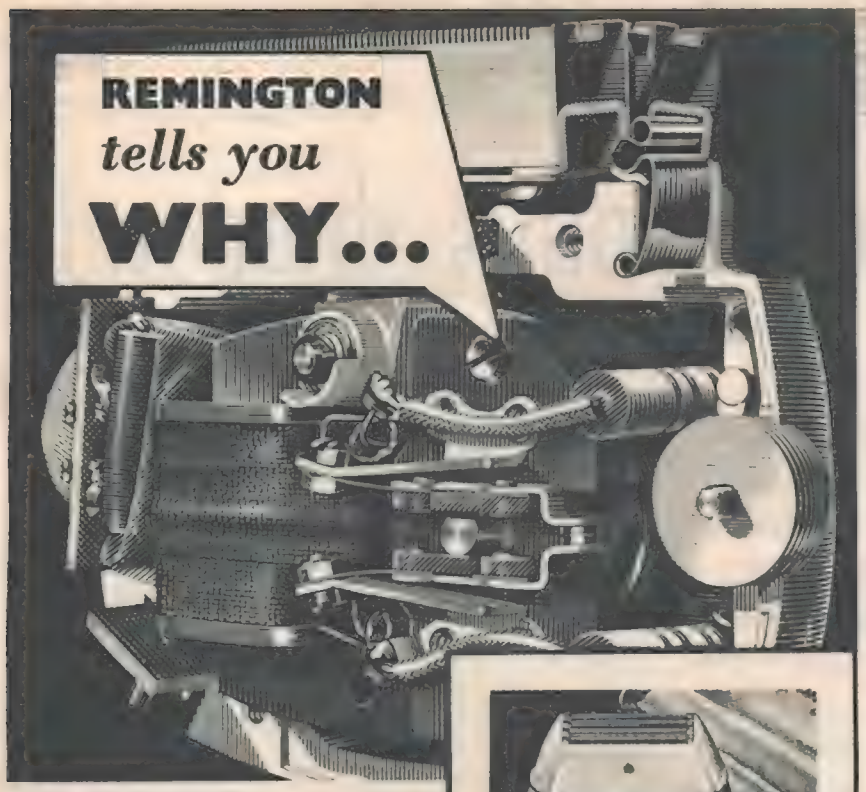

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Spot the Lawbreaker

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DRAWN BY RONALD LAMPITT

in the thickets. It was a grassy place, with a number of rocks strewn about it, and he sat down on one of the rocks, putting the basket down at his side.

A moment later, in a sudden turn, she shone the torch into his face. "Oh—accidentally, of course," he said, "but for a moment I was half-blinded and I couldn't see. You know how it is—your eyes feel stabbed and they start throbbing up and down."

Then, as his eyes cleared, he saw her standing above him.

Whether it was quite accidental again he never quite knew, but he could have sworn that the spear was poised. She stood there exactly as if preparing to strike him, just as she struck the shrimps, between his dazzled eyes.

He supposed it must have been accidental, a mere slip of her hand, because a second later she put out the torch and dropped the spear on the ground. She was kneeling in front of him, grasping his hands.

"Please," she started saying. "Please, Rock, don't go away. Please!" Her voice had a desperate, unnerving break in it, a trembling urgency. "You won't go, will you? When you said you would go I thought I would go mad. Quite mad. I couldn't speak about it before, but don't go, Rock, will you? Please don't go."

As she spoke she drew herself up on her knees, until her face was level with his. Her voice was so uncertain that he actually thought she was sobbing. Even in the brilliance of starlight he was not sure whether her enormous eyes were dry or not and he only remembered the night, remembering it with a sudden stab of panic, when he had kissed her.

"Thérèse," he started saying. "Look——"

"You could live here. I can build a house. I will build a house and live like your *vahine*. It costs nothing. I'll be your *vahine* and work for you. I'll work for you and you can love me. . . ."

He listened, amazed and at first absolutely speechless. Embarrassed, too, he actually managed to stand up without seeming to push her away. A moment later she stood up too, suddenly pressing her body against him, her great arms seizing and holding him in a vice.

"Listen to me," he started saying again. "Look . . . now listen. . . ."

Before he could go on she started kissing him, and she was so violent he could not resist her.

"I might just as well have resisted a buffalo," he said. "And I believe she might have killed me if I had."

He admitted, in fact, an extraordinary thing. He was afraid of her, he said, really quite afraid. He feared her physically.

Then, a moment or so later, a curious change came over her. She seemed to go suddenly limp. She let her hands fall loosely to her sides and she sat down on one of the rocks, quietly.

This quietness of hers was so sudden and so complete that it unnerved him as much as her violence had done. She sat staring heavily into the darkness and for about five minutes he stood there watching her.

All he could hear was the noise of the stream falling away over its stones among the thickets and the small whisper of shrimps as they rustled in the basket.

Then she started speaking.

"Rock——!"

That was as far as she got. Her voice was constricted. The one word was almost a cough.

Then after several more minutes she tried speaking again. By this time her hair had partly fallen over her face and she did not brush it away.

"Rock," she said, "I——"

For the second time she couldn't go on. She put her hands on her knees, gripping them, and her hair fell still farther forward over her face, almost hiding it completely.

"What were you going to say?" he said.

She gave a great sigh, more like a sudden gasp for breath, and then violently locked her hands together.

"Nothing," she said. "Nothing. I. . . ."

"What was it?" he said.

"Nothing," she said. "I was thinking. . . ." She suddenly leaped to her feet, stumbled forward and started clumsily to walk down the mountainside.

"What were you thinking?" he said. He picked up the basket and started after her. "What was it?"

She didn't answer. It was some moments before he caught up with her, crashing heavily down the mountain path.

"Thérèse," he said, "what was it? What were you thinking?"

She crashed on through the thickets, making no attempt to stop or look at him. She blundered forward like an animal that had lost its way. But what really disturbed him was not that, he said. What affected him so much was the enormous and helpless sorrow in her voice when she spoke

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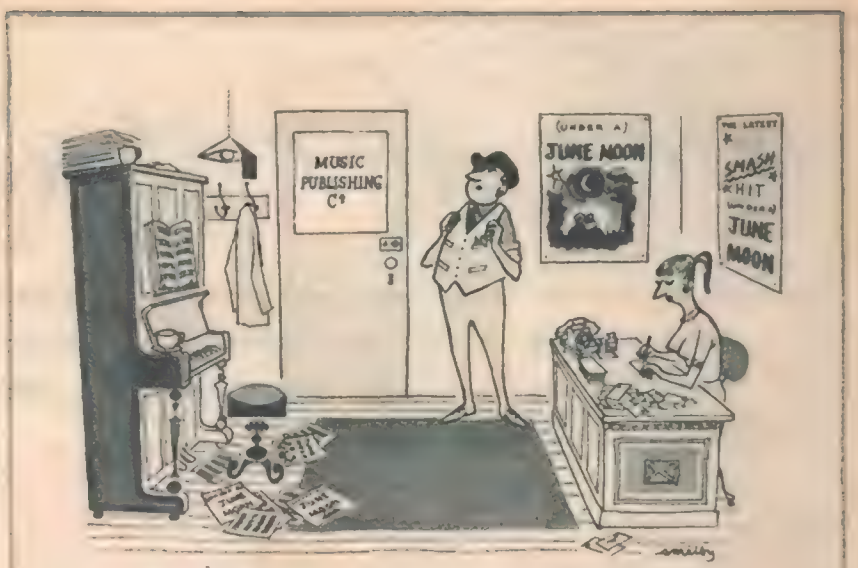

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again. "Thank God," she said, "my thoughts are my own."

He had already made, by that time, the third of his mistakes. He determined not to make another.

"I got the thing taped up," he said. "I found you could pick up a schooner at a village on the other side of the island. In fact, on schooner days and on Saturdays there was a bus that would take you there. The bus actually came by the rest-house, used the track along the lagoon and went round the island by way of the point."

Two or three days before the schooner was due he started to get a few of his things together. He would pack them up a few at a time and then, when the girl was down by the landing-stage, gutting fish or getting water or washing her hair, walk along the track to the house in the thicket and leave them there. Fortunately he had only one bag and, after two or three journeys, most of his things were with the parakeet.

"I know it probably sounds pretty ungrateful and all that. I wanted to do the decent thing but I could see trouble everywhere," he said, "if I didn't get out. Besides, what do you say? If you're going to live with one of these girls you might as well pick a good-looking one. A parakeet. Not that I wanted to. One way and another I felt I'd had about enough and a bit over."

As he said this he gave me another of those dispirited, rather twisted smiles of his. "And I was just about as wrong about *that*," he said, "as I could be."

Then, the morning of the day before the schooner was due to arrive, he began to have something approaching misgivings. He felt very sad. He had not only loved it all. It was, as he was never tired of saying, the most beautiful place on earth. The lagoon alone, sheltered, and guarded by those fantastic palm-fledged mountains behind which every evening the sunset opened up like a blast furnace, flaring with every colour of flame, was paradise itself.

"They say that the original Garden of Eden was here somewhere in these islands," he said, "and my guess is this was it."

All this, together with his thoughts of how nice the people had been, how tranquil and serenely restful it all was, was enough to explain his sadness.

"I could have wept," he said. "In fact I was so damned miserable that when she suggested, that morning, having a trip for a few hours to look for tuna I jumped at it like a shot."

Then, at the last moment, when the boat was ready, he remembered being alone with her twice before, once on the landing stage and once on the mountain, and he didn't fancy it a third time.

"Let the boy come, won't you?" he said. "He loves the boat. He handles it well, too. Go on—let the boy come!"

The boy was standing on the landing stage, watching his sister and Rockley prepare the boat. He gave an eager glance at her as Rockley spoke. For a moment she hesitated. Then she gave one of those strong sudden twists of her neck, threw her long hair back from her shoulder and said an odd thing: "If he likes to take the risk."

At once the boy clambered down into the boat and in five minutes they were sailing seawards down the lagoon on a light warm breeze. Rockley steered, the boy handled the sail and Thérèse squatted in the bows, busying herself with lines and the long white-feathered spinners they were going to use for lures.

ROCKLEY noticed that she didn't speak much, though once, when they were almost level with the house where the parakeet lived, she turned full round, faced him and said: "Wouldn't you rather be walking instead?"

He didn't pay much attention at the time. No one was moving outside the house. He couldn't help wondering what might have happened if the parakeet had suddenly come out, recognized him and waved her hand; but nothing happened, and the boat sailed tranquilly past the house and the thicket of breadfruit and hibiscus with their pretty scatterings of fallen flowers.

After a time he became more and more aware of the growing thunder of the reef. At the mouth of the lagoon, still a mile or more from the gap, it was already like the battering surge of an enormous waterfall.

He was surprised, even at that distance, by the height of the breaking spray and the strength of the tow pouring in through the gap. Beyond it the Pacific looked calm enough, a brilliant slaty blue without so much as a single white crest across it, but he was to discover only a few minutes later that it was really corrugated by deep, long and powerful swells.

Meanwhile the boy took in the sail and Thérèse started to steer, calling to Rockley at the same time to take a paddle. For another twenty minutes he and the boy paddled towards and finally through the gap.

It was hard going and once or twice they seemed, he thought, to be making no headway at all against the power of the tow. On both sides the reef rose like rough brown jaws, the coral clear of water, the rust of the wreck glinting scabbily in the iridescent sunshine.

By now he was paddling so hard that

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he had no time even to brush the sweat from his face. He simply let it pour down over his eyes and lips and into his open mouth, the rivulets of it gathering on his neck and chest and pouring down his body. Then his legs began to feel soggy. He was sucking his breath in short desperate gasps. Then he felt the boat give a sudden twist, almost a whip to starboard, and he saw the boy ease his rate of paddling.

Less than a minute later the sail was up again and they were well clear of the reef, out in the open sea.

After the exertion of paddling he felt considerably exhausted; so much so that for a time he paid very little attention to either the girl, who was steering now, or her brother, who once again was handling the sail. He thought he heard her occasionally giving directions to the boy about a change of course but now she spoke in Tahitian and he was not quite sure.

He actually shut his eyes for a moment or two and then was sharply woken out of himself by a sudden brittleness in her voice, a hard rasping shout, and he opened his eyes to see her hauling on the thick stumpy rod from the bows, her enormous forearms locked stiff with the pull of the line.

A FEW moments later the first tuna was thrashing about in the well of the boat. It wasn't very large and the girl, as if angry or disappointed about its size, suddenly picked up a short stump of wood and started clubbing it to death. She hit it so severely that it actually gave a surprised sort of leap a foot or two in the air, and blood spurted everywhere.

Then she whipped out a knife. It was the same knife she had brandished above the giant ray in the lagoon. It was short, thick and slightly curved. She bent over the dying fish. She lifted the knife quickly as if she were going to plunge it into the short, iron-smooth body. The boy was at the sail, his back turned.

Rockley waited for the downward cut of the knife. Instead he saw her stand up to her full height. She stood there for a second or two before he realized that her face suddenly looked evil and dark.

Then she gave a grotesque short yell. "You go to the house!" she yelled. "You go to that girl! You're going away with her. I saw you take your things. You go to that house, don't you?"

She made a powerful lunge at his face with the knife. He instinctively put up a hand to protect himself and he felt the knife run in a hot sharp line down his outer forearm. He staggered for a moment and the boat started rocking. He was aware of her making a second lunge. She looked queerly unkempt and wild now. She started yelling again, the words incoherent this time.

The boy too stood up, relinquishing

Spot the Lawbreaker

See page 38

IN 1921, the Lord Chief Justice ruled that "motorists must not go for considerable distances without giving an opportunity to cars which happen to be behind to pass." This followed a motorist's appeal against a conviction by a magistrate, says a barrister-at-law. A motorist can take an offending car's number and then report its driver to a policeman. The driver may be summoned for obstructing the highway.

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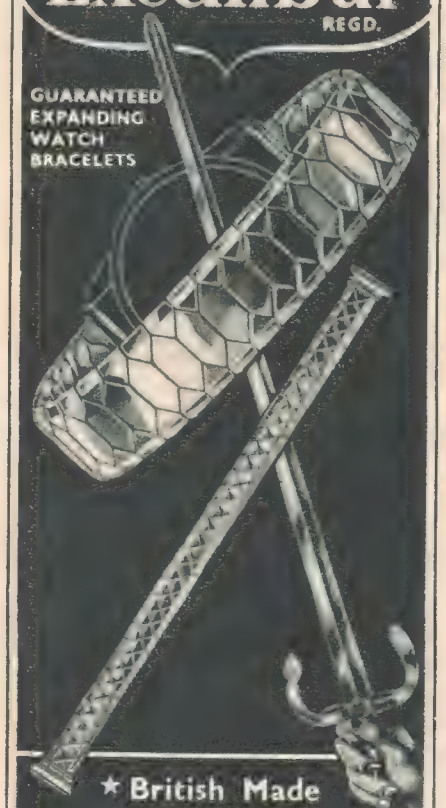

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OPEN TO VIEW

by JAMES LEES-MILNE

Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER

Victoria sent primroses to Hughenden —as a wreath for her favourite minister

ON April 26, 1881, a company of distinguished men was assembled at an unpretentious, but very Victorian, manor-house in the Chilterns. Among them were the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, and two future Prime Ministers. The Queen herself was unable to be present but she sent two wreaths, one being entirely of primroses with a card on which was written in her own hand: "His favourite flowers from Osborne, a tribute of affection from Queen Victoria."

Slowly and reverently, the long procession followed the coffin of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, down the drive to the little church in the park.

Four days later, Dizzy's sovereign came to pay a personal tribute to the memory of her faithful minister. She trod the path to the churchyard, and the vault was reopened so that she might lay yet another wreath on the coffin. Over Beaconsfield's pew in the chancel she had erected a personal monument, with the following wording: "To the dear and honoured memory of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield, this memorial is placed by his grateful Sovereign and Friend, Victoria, R.I."

When Disraeli bought Hughenden in 1847 it was a simple three-storied building. In 1862-63 he wholly remodelled it in red brick in accordance with the taste of the period. The Gothic architect E. P. Lamb was called in and added the ornamental parapet and pinnacles. In Disraeli's own words the house assumed "a new form and character." In the grounds he laid out what he called a "German Forest" of ornamental trees, and formed a lake for his two swans, Hero and Leander.

Today, Hughenden, now in the keeping of the National Trust, still faithfully reflects Disraeli's personality. The hall and staircase are hung with portraits of his contemporaries. The library shelves are packed with his books. The drawing-room is gay with his wife's needlework and embroidery. The study contains presents from the Queen and his friends, and such intimate and touching relics as his school desk and the writing-paper heavily edged in black which he always used after Lady Beaconsfield's death.

How to get there: Hughenden Manor is 1½ miles north of High Wycombe (W.R.). *Open:* Tuesday to Friday, 2 till 6, or till dusk if earlier; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 till 1, 2 till 6, or dusk. Closed: Mondays (except Monday bank holidays, when open 2 till 6, or dusk); Tuesdays after a Monday bank holiday; and throughout January.

his hold on the sail. He shouted something, too, at the same time trying to grab at her arm. She moved so quickly, stabbing the air, that he missed her completely, overbalanced and himself made a grab at the air.

A moment later the spar, swinging round, struck the boy full across the mouth. He fell like a boxer, backwards, eyes wide and cast upward, stunned before hitting the water.

In a flash the girl stooped, picked up the bloody, slithering fish in her arms and hurled it over the stern. A moment later she was swimming.

The boy had already disappeared. And for the space of what seemed to be several minutes, though it could not have been more than a moment or two after she dived, Rockley was alone in the boat.

In the confusion he had fallen on his knees. His arm was drenched in blood. Now he tried for several seconds to get up. Nothing happened. He tried to clutch the side of the boat with his good arm and then, already fainting, with the other. His head fell on his arms and blood started spewing over his face and shirt and body.

He came round to find himself hanging over the side of the boat. He was too weak to do anything for a moment or two but presently he managed to heave his legs upwards until he was half on his knees again. Then with his good

arm he started struggling to drag his shirt over his head.

The shirt was half-way off when he heard the girl shouting. His head was trapped, as it were, in a crazy sort of bag. From a distance her voice sounded unreal and hoarsely muffled. After a second or so he managed to drag his shirt free of his head and then, his eyes woken suddenly by the dazzle of sunlight, he saw the girl.

She was already hanging on to the side of the boat, holding the boy. She was thrashing water violently with her legs and trying at the same time to heave the boy with her enormous arms and shoulders out of the water. It was as much as Rockley could do to crook his good arm over the side and shout for the boy to clutch it.

A second or two later the girl gave a tremendous heave and the boy fell face forwards into the boat. As he fell over the side he knocked Rockley, too weak even to kneel now, on to his back. Rockley groped there for a moment, blood pouring down his arms and mingling with tuna blood, and then managed to raise himself on one hand, partly supporting himself on one of the paddles.

He was still struggling up when the girl started screaming. The boy yelled, whipped the paddle suddenly from under Rockley's knees and started madly thrashing water. All the time the girl continued screaming, trying at the same time to heave herself into the boat by her hands.

It was not more than five minutes, Rockley said, at most ten, before he and the boy somehow managed to pull her aboard. It seemed, he said, like a day. After a time she stopped screaming. Her great mouth folded itself down

KINDNESS—4

Kindness is the sunshine in which virtue grows.

R. G. Ingersoll

until the lower lip was invisible and her teeth, clenched far below it, were actually drawing blood.

She still had so much strength that, even then, at the very last moment, she made the final effort of pulling herself aboard. Her entire body seemed to retch itself into the boat with a terrible groan.

She lay there for a minute, perhaps longer, face downwards, before Rockley realized that what he thought was merely the tangled mass of her water-soaked *pareue* folded like a twisted red sheet about the right side of her body was really all that was left, on that side, of her thigh. The teeth of the shark had scoured deep into the flesh, so that the bone stared blue.

She somehow turned herself over on her back, still conscious. Rockley picked up his shirt, throwing it over her thigh. Faintness started a second wave of blackness across his eyes and by the time he had defeated it he was aware of the boy using his own shirt to bandage his arm.

Some time later the boy had the sail set up again and the breeze, blowing crossways towards the reef, began to take them back to shore. All the time the girl lay starkly conscious, her big hands gripping the sides of the boat in stiff agony, her teeth biting lower and lower into the jaw.

For most of the journey back he was simply unaware of the sea. Once or twice he fainted off again and then he was aware, presently, of kneeling beside her, smoothing her hair with his good hand. There was nothing else he could possibly do for her and it was some time before there was even a hint of conscious recognition in the enormous eyes.

Then quite quietly, and with a strength of tone that almost fooled him for a moment into thinking that he was, after all, merely on the fringes of a dream of pure ghastliness, she said: "I'm glad you're with me."

He could find nothing to say in

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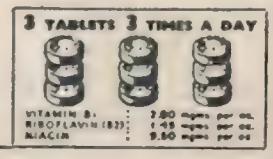

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answer. It was actually the first time her mouth had relaxed, allowing the teeth to give up the cruel biting of her jaw. Almost at the same time, as if she had suddenly defeated all pain, her hands relaxed too, unlocked themselves from the side of the boat and folded themselves weakly across the front of her body.

"Rock," she said, "let me hold your hand."

For a long time she held his hand while keeping her eyes fixed on his face.

"I'm sorry about the other hand," she said once; and again he could find nothing to say in answer except, so long afterwards that it was merely like an echo that had lost itself across the space of sea and had in some uncanny way floated back again:

"I'm sorry, too."

Half an hour later they were running through the gap. All this time he had been so unaware of both time and distance that he actually saw the reef before being aware of the thunder of its roar about him. In the same way he had forgotten the boy, sitting all the time like a strangely aged little statue, never speaking, in the stern.

As they drew into the calmness of the lagoon she actually smiled up at him, held his hand a fraction closer and spoke about the other girl.

"I found out last night," she said. "I saw you go there. Then I knew you had been there before."

It would have been better, he said, if she had stuck the knife into him after all. He could have borne quite easily, even with gratitude, another slash at his face. What he could not bear was her utter lack of scorn, and that apparently inexhaustible strength of hers that had now expanded into an amazing, unreproachful proudness and calm.

"I couldn't sleep last night. Then I came and looked at you while you were asleep," she said slowly, "and I knew you were going away from me."

Now they were running quite fast into the lagoon. He stared away from her towards the thickets beyond the white strips of beach, hot in the sunshine, and to the rising tiers of palm.

"I said I wouldn't let you go away from me," she said.

He looked back at her face. Its sudden relaxation after pain into calmness made it appear, quite suddenly, not so large as before. The lips were more compact. Even the big nostrils seemed to have contracted.

"Now when you go away from me it won't matter, will it?" she said.

He could find nothing to say in answer.

".I told you my thoughts were my own," she said. "Do you remember?"

Her voice was very low. He still could not speak or look at her and all his pain and fondness for her dissolved into sudden desolation. He was aware of nothing except a long, profound, tormenting anguish before, for the fifth or sixth time, he fainted away.

When he looked at her again her eyes were staring straight up into glaring sunshine. Her face was no longer placid. In its final moments, no longer ugly, it seemed to have expanded again with remarkable strength, defiantly. With pride she seemed to be glaring back at the flaming sky, handsome and almost contemptuous as she lay there.

A moment later he covered her face. The boat ran past the house in the thickets, where the little parakeet lived, and all across the lagoon the crowing of the jungle cocks was proud and clear.

THE END

KINDNESS—5

The cheapest of all things is kindness, its exercise requiring the least possible trouble and self-sacrifice.

Samuel Smiles

This is *my* life

Continued from page 13

the class with that rangy look of his; settled his gaze on me in the back row and observed gently: "Well, it may not be able to talk, but obviously it's able to move."

This brought a gust of laughter from the class.

Carew was a mathematician and, with Brother Macauley, he shared the job of knocking the final edges off us before we set out into the world. Macauley was quiet and cultured and a great one for literature who spent a lot of time reading Horace. He encouraged me with my poetry, and when I showed him my latest piece, he was so impressed that he suggested that he might show it to Francis MacManus, who besides being one of our lay teachers, was also a novelist of some distinction. "I think we should get a professional opinion on it, Eamonn," he said.

He took the manuscript, and made an appointment for me to see MacManus. I waited outside the door, and MacManus came out holding my great work in his hands. He looked straight into me and then, offering it back, said: "Tell me, son—do you always suffer from a pain in the belly?" The remark stung me, but I left without a word.

Macauley's kindness seemed to have gone astray, and I was to let him down again quite soon. He liked my essays, and we had just been set to do one on The Seven Ages Of Man. Eager to show off his class to a school visitor, Macauley pointed to me and said: "Eamonn—stand up and read your essay, will you." I noticed the wry looks around me, and as I began reading someone hissed, "Sissy!" and when I glanced up again other mischievous grimaces and unreportable remarks were made. Towards the end of the third page, it became too much for me. I said, "Oh, hell! . . ." and sat down.

This was the first time I had spoken in public. It did not augur well, but at least it made it all too clear that I must conquer my shyness and the effect it had on other people. I started taking part in school plays, attended the optional elocution class, joined the debating society, and took up physical training, which was also an extra subject, outside the curriculum.

Most of the time, we marched around the yard swinging clubs, and I enjoyed it mostly for the companionship of John Ohle, a long-faced boy with prominent teeth. He could wag his ears like a rabbit, and he spent weeks teaching me how to do it. Because of his front teeth formation, he could also whistle without moving his lips. This he did while we marched around, and it drove the drill instructor into a frenzy. Looking for the culprit, the instructor would fix me with a withering look because I was closer to the source of the sound than anyone except the blank-faced Ohle himself, and I would be going blue in the face with guilt hysteria.

Our elocution teacher, Ena M. Burke, appeared to find me far too repressed. While others shone in solo recitations, I was self-conscious and came out with the words flatly and in a hurry. In one school play she put on —*Tir na n-óg, The Land Of Youth*—I played the king on his throne, as the warriors and courtiers came to pay homage. Inevitably, I lost my lines and Miss Burke had to climb onstage to the foot of the throne to put me right.

In the debating society, I forced myself to my feet to speak, and found it at first a terrible ordeal. Many of the debates fastened on the partition of Ireland, a favourite subject, and it was also fashionable to advance the most outrageous theories, the idea being to twist an established fact or truth into reverse and try to rationalize it. When I was auditor, or president, I took as my end-of-term subject the idea that the young man leaving school or university should start work on the top salary scale, perhaps £5,000 a year, and get less as he grew older. That

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WORRY

To worry continually is neither normal nor healthy, and can usually be traced to some nervous disturbance. If, then, you seem to worry more than other people, it is more than likely that your "nerves" are to blame.

DEPRESSION

Your whole outlook is profoundly influenced by your nervous mechanism. If you are subject to constant depression and worry, it is probably a sign that your "nerves" are at fault.

INDIGESTION

The acid secretion and digestive movements of the stomach are under the direct control of the nervous system. Consequently, any nervous upset such as worry, irritability or overwork can cause gastric discomfort, heartburn and even pain.

SLEEPLESSNESS

Sleeplessness is often the result of emotional stress or unconscious anxiety caused by nervous tension. Rid yourself of this tension, restore the normal equilibrium of your "nerves" and sound sleep should follow automatically.

IRRITABILITY

In nearly every case of normally healthy people becoming irritable and bad-tempered, the trouble can be traced to "nerves".

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Everyone feels tired sometimes. But to suffer continuously from a lack of energy and general lassitude can well mean that your "nerves" are the trouble.

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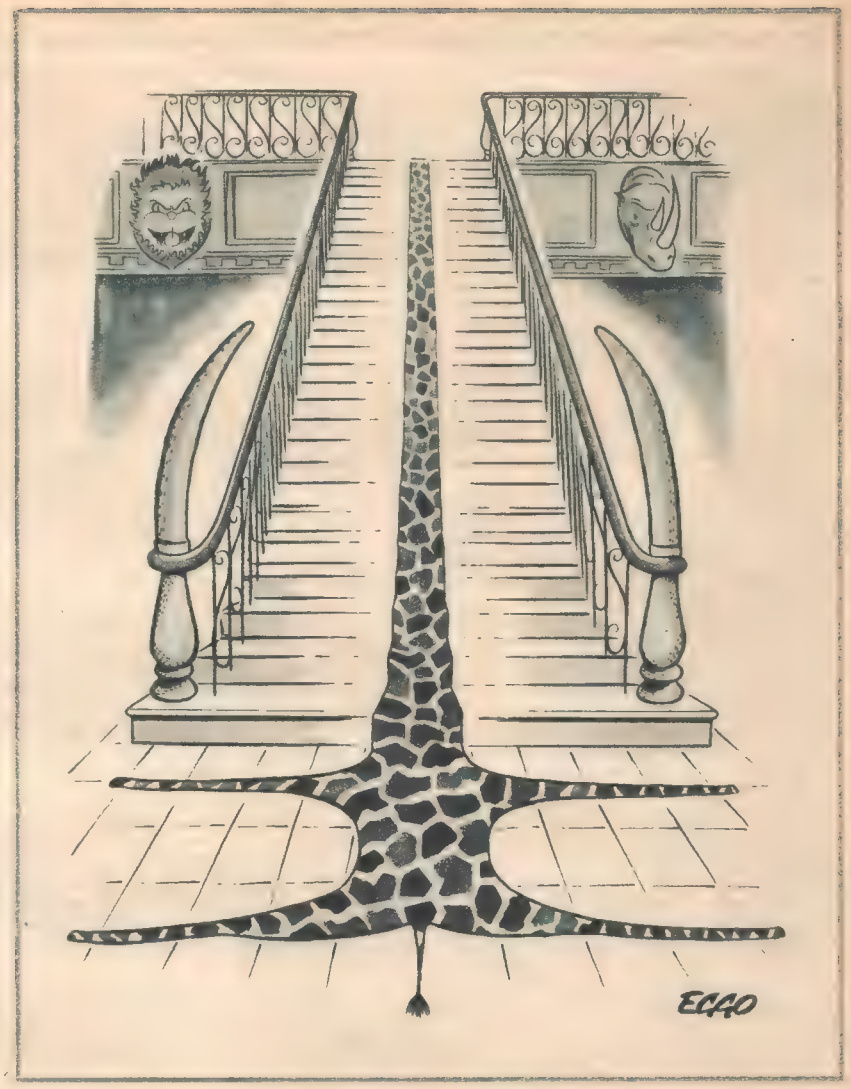

way, he would have the money when he most needed it to buy a house and look after his wife and family.

I never shone in the debating society. I was too introspective and too moderate politically for that, and my real interests were literature, boxing and, increasingly, the theatre. A group of us, including Joe Reynolds, who is still busy writing in Ireland, and Micheal Mawe, who had an obscure style of writing and was way ahead of his time, met in each other's homes to discuss writers and plays.

We took to going regularly to the Gate Theatre, where a company inspired by an Irishman, Micheal MacLiammoir, and an Englishman, Hilton Edwards, was making a fine reputation. Gallery seats cost ninepence, and I never noticed how hard the wooden seats were. It was a varied repertory: Shakespeare, the classics, modern commercial plays. I came to love the theatre as never before, though for years my father had been deeply concerned with amateur productions, first as an actor, then latterly as a producer. Sometimes on Sunday mornings I had gone down with him to Clarendon Street Hall, a social club attached to the church, through the billiards room where all the tables were occupied, and into the rehearsal room. Always, I felt strangely embarrassed seeing my father studying his lines up there.

MacLiammoir and Edwards rooted my theatre interests and I thought of forming a drama group myself as a vehicle, primarily, for the plays I intended to write. Life was now hectic, for as well as boxing, I was also working for my honours leaving certificate. There was talk at home about the possibilities of my going on to Dublin University, but I was more interested in getting a job and studying in my spare time.

Every night I scanned the situations vacant column of the *Evening Herald*. It came down to a question of taking a job on the strength of such qualifications as I had, or sitting more examinations for the civil service or Dublin Corporation. At this time, while I was still at school and looking for a job, I qualified for the finals of the All-Ireland amateur boxing championships which were to be fought out at Portlaoighise.

My uncle now had a car and he drove us—Mother, Father, my aunt and myself—the sixty miles to the hall. At the entrance my mother suddenly changed her mind about watching me, and insisted on waiting outside. Even as I climbed through the ropes I kept thinking that she must be feeling cold out there, and that she was probably praying for me. I won the fight on points, and when I rejoined the family in the car my mother's look of relief changed to concern as she spotted the blue swelling near my right eye. My father and my uncle were cock-a-hoop, but Mother said: "Eamonn, it is really time you gave up this sort of thing."

In fact, my boxing successes gave me two fresh ideas about work, I wrote an article for the *Evening Herald* about training for boxing and, although the sports editor knocked it around a bit, it was published.

It also occurred to me that with my boxing experience and the elocution lessons I had taken I was a ready-made boxing commentator for Radio Eireann. I applied, and was called for an audition to the studios just above the General Post Office—but I heard nothing more. I kept up the search for work, and one night an advertisement appeared for a junior clerk at the Hibernian Insurance Company. I got the job—at £60 a year.

Even in the first week, when the novelty should have had some appeal, I found the work irksome. I had to sit all day long at a desk in front of the underwriters and policywriters, and when a client came in I had to go up and say, "Yes, sir, what is it you want?" When he had told me, I passed him over to the official concerned. This lack of real responsibility infuriated me. It was also impressed upon me that my appearance was important, and I realized that it would not be well received if I were to turn up the morning after a fight with a scar or a half-closed eye. Temporarily, I cut down on the fighting.

With professional examinations coming up, I was studying such books as *Principles And Practice Of Fire*

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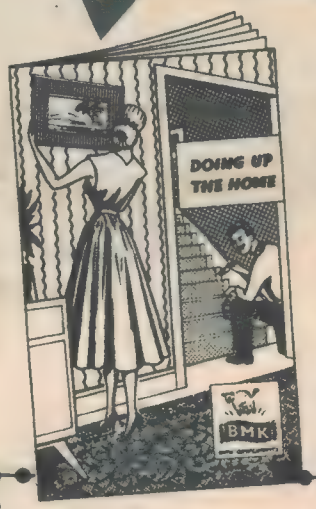

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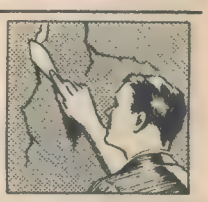

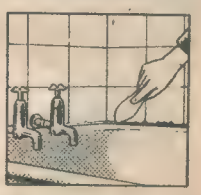

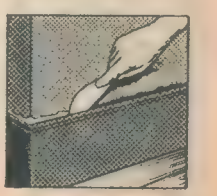

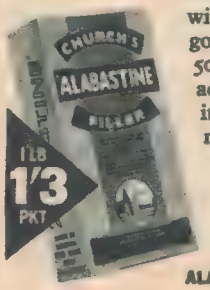

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Insurance and *Principles Of Indemnity*, but I found literature and the drama much more interesting and though I had a thirst for knowledge, it was not knowledge about insurance that I sought. I enrolled for an external course with Dublin University, taking a strange selection of subjects—English, Latin, Spanish and logic.

I was still turning out poems in the evenings and still meeting that group of friends who shared my interests. We had talked for some time about forming a drama group. Now it materialized. We discovered that we could hire the town hall for £10, which could be produced from a whip round among our families, and characteristically, for we were very much under his influence, we opened with one of MacLiammoir's plays.

Then came *Night Must Fall*. This proved to be a great triumph of ignorance on my part, for I played Danny, who is hardly ever offstage from curtain to curtain. I did not understand the character properly and, to make it worse, I had to sing "Mighty Lak' A Rose." In my days with the choir, I had usually got away with it by not singing very loud; now I was solo, and I could hardly sing a note. Through luck and the generosity of the audience, I carried it off.

Afterwards, my father turned up in the dressing-room with a friend, none other than F. J. McCormick. This great actor with the soft voice and twinkling manner complimented me on my performance. "I was fascinated with it," he said. All through, I had felt like a child walking along a precipice, yet here was McCormick saying it was good. Years later, McCormick was to steal Carol Reed's film, *Odd Man Out*, as the old man with the birds; and, tragically, he was to die just a week after the picture's release.

To try to improve my acting, I joined the Gaiety School Of Acting run by one of Ireland's greatest actresses, Ria Mooney, who was to become the Abbey Theatre's producer. Despite Ena Burke's coaching, I was having a lot of trouble over some words, especially those with a "u" in the middle and I tended to add syllables, saying "fillum" for "film." Ria found all this thoroughly exasperating, but she included me in *Crabbed Age And Youth*, the shorter of two plays she was putting on at the Gaiety Theatre. Several times she pulled me up about my pronunciation.

At the dress rehearsal we reached a point in the play where a lady faints with her daughters and their suitors around her. As one of the suitors I had to take charge and shout, "A glass of water—quick!" This was followed by several pages of dialogue, by which time the lady had come round and I had to call for a cushion. When I got to the word "cushion," Ria put her hands to her head and excitedly remonstrated: "Cushion, Eamonn. Cushion, cushion, cushion." I had sounded the vowel as in luck instead of as in look.

Eventually I managed it—with a desperate tongue contortion.

On the night of the play, we were approaching the fainting scene, and I was standing in the wings, and this cushion business was playing on my mind. I gagged about it to another actor next to me, and stood there repeating in a defensively comic fashion: "Cushion, cushion, cushion." Then the lady fainted, and I made my entrance, and it was a glass of water I should have called for. But I said: "Get me a cushion." The rest of the cast alertly skipped four pages of script and Ria dashed about backstage in an effort to repair the damage. It was no good. I had fouled up the play, and nobody needed to tell me.

After that, I gave more time to the *Principles And Practice Of Fire Insurance*.

I was washed up as an actor. Yet I hated being a junior clerk, and my lack of interest was evident to my father, who remarked on it several times, as it must have been to my superiors at the Hibernian. Then, one morning when I was shaving, my mother called upstairs to say that there was a letter for me. I ran down, and asked her to open it as my hands as well as my face were covered in soap.

It was from Radio Eireann, and I was being offered my first boxing commentary from the National Stadium, Dublin. I was nineteen, and the world was an oyster, and Dublin was bathed in early morning sunshine as I cycled down to the office. Nothing could stop me now, I thought, and I was so full of the wonder of it that I went through some traffic lights at red.

It never occurred to me that as a broadcaster, as in most other things, I was as green as the Shamrock itself.

NEXT WEEK: My hectic life trying to keep three jobs

KINDNESS—6

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A schoolboy trains to out-swim the world

Continued from page 18

had been coached for several months complained to his trainer at Wallasey Swimming Club, which meets in the Guinea Gap baths on the banks of the River Mersey: "All this training is a waste of time. My pal has never had a lesson in his life and he's still beating me."

"Why don't you bring him along to the club then?" said the coach.

The boy who came, after asking his mother for the 5s. membership fee, was Neil McKechnie. The coach was Frank Parrington, who had already trained his wife, Lillian Preece, to world standard, and had seen her captain the British team and take part in the Olympic Games of 1948 and 1952.

Parrington, a baths engineer, says: "When I first saw Neil he looked a typical, lumbering, raw-boned swimmer, but I knew he was something out of the ordinary when I saw how he thrust himself through the water with his massive hands and feet."

Within six months, McKechnie was swimming half a mile a day, and in December, 1953, broke his first junior record. He swam the 440 yards in 5 minutes 21 seconds.

The following evening Parrington suggested a three-year plan which would knock a minute off Neil's quarter-mile time by the start of the 1956 Olympics. This would bring him well inside the present 400 metres world record of 4 minutes 26.7 seconds.

Today, with more than two years of the plan gone, McKechnie is beating his schedule. In the first year he clipped more than twenty seconds off his 440 yards time and picked up five English junior records. In the second year, 1955, while still a junior, he smashed every English senior record from 100 yards to a mile. He cut down his quarter-mile time by the agreed twenty seconds when he broke world champion Jack Wardrop's British record in 4 minutes 39.5 seconds last July.

"I'm not surprised any more by what Neil does," says Parrington. "He is in the last year of the plan and has only to improve half as much as he has done every year so far to break the world record. I expect him to do that this summer."

McKechnie travels thousands of miles in pursuit of swimming titles. He made his first trip abroad, to Belgium, when he was fifteen. He gained his place in the English team when another swimmer dropped out.

Last November, Neil flew to Moscow as a member of the first official British team to go to Russia. The Red Army pool, with its own gymnasium, was the most palatial he had ever swum in. The British team stayed in a 1,300-room hotel which had a television set in every room on their floor.

UNLIKE many swimmers who take a complete three-month rest in the winter, McKechnie faces an arduous all-the-year-round training programme. During the winter he is in "light" training, covering about two miles in the water three or four times a week.

In the summer school holidays, when training reaches its peak, he will swim five miles every day and spend hours doing land exercises.

His training does not entail any special diet. He can eat what he likes and will get through a big meal an hour before a race. In Moscow he ate twenty-four steaks in ten days.

"The Russians gave us their idea of English cooking," says McKechnie. "We had steaks for breakfast and boiled eggs which were liquid."

Critics of McKechnie's heavy training and racing programme say that he will burn himself out while still young. Parrington does not agree.

"It is fatal for a middle-distance swimmer ever to lay off swimming completely, and the pre-race training cannot be too testing."

During term-time Neil spends six hours a day at Wallasey Grammar School and another two doing homework. He is sometimes allowed time off

for big swimming events, but makes up for it with extra work at home.

Last June McKechnie was chosen to swim for Britain in a weekend match against Germany at Aberdeen. The match came in the middle of examinations. On Thursday he took his French papers in Wallasey, flew to Scotland that same evening, and sat for his maths paper at an Aberdeen school on Friday morning.

In the evening and on Saturday, he swam for his country, made the weary train journey back to Wallasey on Sunday and sat for more exams on Monday. Despite the rush he gained his General Certificate of Education, passing in five subjects out of seven.

McKechnie also plays Rugby and takes part in athletics—with his coach's approval ("It keeps him fit and happy"). An hour after he had broken one of his English records last summer, he was putting the shot for the school against the Old Boys.

Neil was born on April 28, 1939, at Wallasey. His father was a chief engineer on deep-sea ships. Although his parents were Scots, his birth and residence in England have given him the entrée to the England team and to English records.

His widowed mother has travelled hundreds of miles to see McKechnie swim, but when she misses a meeting she has difficulty in getting him to tell her exactly what he has done. If he tells her that he did "fair" it usually means that he won; "not too bad" indicates that he has broken a record.

When arrangements for a race in which McKechnie was to swim broke down, Parrington told the B.B.C., who had planned a broadcast, that a 440 yards double-record attempt would be made at Wallasey instead. He mapped out two schedules for the swim: one which would take McKechnie past the English record of 4 minutes 46.2 seconds, the other to beat the British record of 4 minutes 41.9 seconds.

"He had to swim faster than he had ever done," says his coach.

Parrington arranged to give a one thumb-up signal to the B.B.C. commentator if McKechnie was on time for the English record as he completed each length of the baths, and two thumbs-up for the British record.

"I kept two thumbs up all through the swim but Neil was the most surprised person in the baths when he learned that he had broken the record by over two seconds. He just hadn't realized how good he was." THE END

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10 Kitchen Luxuries as Bonuses—see coupon

THIS WAY TO THE PRIZE-LIST

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

John's Budget	The Oil
To Put The World Right	With A Stroke Of The Pen
Seeds Of Prosperity	Shipwrecked
Dearer Than Ever	What She'll Do Next
On Nature's Stage	Jeers And Sneers
That Youth	A Thousand Jobs
Economic Indigestion	Didn't Leave Much
Led To The Slaughter	Foreman Dad
A Shocking Thing	Creeping In
Without A Friend	Taking An Awful Risk

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

We Can.....It, But ..... In ..... Arms
Not Fit To Be..... ..... Has To Watch His.....
Apart From The..... ..... Through The ..... Barrier

EXAMPLE ..... |6d.

BULLET

EX. ..... |6d.

B.

EX. ..... |6d.

B

EX. ..... |6d.

B.

EX. ..... |6d.

B.

10-in-1 BONUS Grand 10-in-1 Bonus of luxuries for the kitchen to each of the 20 chief winners whose successful *Bullet* was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

2,031

Closing Postmark MONDAY, MAR. 26

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. Value.....

Signed.....

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No. .....

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Stick 2½d. stamp on this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) for the new 4-in-1 "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*, dated March 31, containing coupons for *Bullets* 2,033, 2,034, 2,035 and 2,036.

NAME.....

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MR. F. PRITCHARD (115 Broadwater Crescent, Stevenage New Town) is busy improving his home with a £750 cheque, his first cash reward for a *Bullet*. His winning words were: CARRYING THE CAN — PARENTS — THROUGH DROPPING *Cane?* Your words on coupon below can win 781 cheques!

Chief Winners No. 2,026

FIRST PRIZE, £750: E. Smithson, 25 Parrs Wood Road, Didsbury, Manchester: **In The Same Boat Nations, Watching Atolls Vanish.**

£50: J. Stewart, 13 Hillside Gardens, Dean's Road, Wolverhampton: MATRIMONY'S SHIP—WE LAUNCHED—IN *Puddle!*

£25: Mrs. N. Fisher, 6 East Grove, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent: WATCHING THE GROCER—*Blowing* BAG OPEN—*Exploded!*

OTHER AWARDS: £10: R. O. Wimbury, "Glenythan," 19 Beechwood Road, West Bromwich: THE GREATEST UNION — EAST, WEST — *World* BLESSED! £9: L. Knight, 6A Argyle Road, London, N.W.9: WATCHING THE COMMUNISTS—RUN UNIONS, RUM *Members!* £8: J. E. Hurley, "Pyrcot," North Street, Williton, Taunton: TO THE DEVIL—EVERY SPIRE, "FIXED BAYONET." £7: D. A. Webb, 9 Hardinge Road, London, N.W.10: WATCHING THE PENNIES — GRANDMA — SHILLINGS, MOTHER—*Daughter*——? £6: J. Lightburn, 67 Lynton Road, Southport: AGE WE LIVE IN—A "*Goodness* GRACIOUS!" ONE! £5: L. Mallon, "Greenhyde," Langley Road, Winchcombe, Glos: WITH PSYCHIATRY TO HELP — NOBODY NEED LACK NEUROSIS! £5: Miss J. Seal, 5 Wessex Road, Ringwood: SHOCK FOR OUR VILLAGE — PIPED WATER *Flooding* HOUSES!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. Further 200 prizes have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated April 21), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, April 7, for early news of No. 2,031 result.)

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 2,031, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

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